

Eight Wolves, and a Human

by Panda Mistress

Category: HakuÅ•ki/è-„æ;æé¬½

Genre: Romance, Supernatural

Language: English

Characters: Chizuru Y.

Status: Completed

Published: 2013-03-16 03:37:23

Updated: 2013-06-26 23:02:12

Packaged: 2016-04-26 21:16:03

Rating: T

Chapters: 27

Words: 46,645

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: AU: Chizuru accidentally stumbles into Mibu Forest where she meets men who can change into wolves. Soon she realizes that she has become infatuated with each and every one of them. The curse they are under is making the situation even more awkward when more un humane creatures rises and tries to kidnap her. Wolves of Mibu, will you fight for your lives, or hers?

1. Encounter with the Wolves

Encounter with the Wolves

~ ~ ~**

>**"Okay, I'll be going now!" I cried out to my neighbor friend who was sweeping the leaves away from the front of the house.

She looked up at me. "Be careful Chizuru! I've heard that there has been strange things happening in Mibu Forest."

I gave her a smile and bowed.

"Don't worry about me! I'll be home soon!"

The women went back to her sweeping and I headed towards the direction of Mibu Forest.

I was heading over to my friend's sick mother's house to deliver some goodies that were in my basket. Unfortunately, it was through Mibu Forest so I have to cut across there.

For the trip, I was in a simple pink kimono printed with Sakura blossoms that reached my ankles and my hair was tied up in a bun held together with two long silver pins, which was a gift from my father: Yukimura Kodo.

He was a western doctor which was quite rare in Japan.

Father was away on a business trip in the United States and would always send me gifts from time to time.

I sighed.

Sometimes I wished he would stop sending me things. The house was getting cramped with all the extra stuff.

While ungraciously mumbling to myself, I hadn't realized that I had entered Mibu Forest.

I looked around. This was my first time in Mibu Forest and already I'm not a big fan.

Most of the trees were dying and the bushes on the ground were held together by their thin branches that were poking up.

All around me, the only sound that could be heard was my rapid breathing.

I gulped.

"Well, it can't get any worse right?" I said to no one.

I took a step forward and my kimono got snagged onto one of the bushes.

Ah great.

I bent down and placed the basket on the ground and tugged at the branch.

"Come on... Get off me already!" With one mighty pull the branch came off but it took with it a piece of my kimono as a souvenir.

I looked at my ripped kimono in my palm. "Oh well, I wasn't a really big fan of kimonos..."

After my father came back one day from the States, he brought back with him a whole bunch of clothes that I've never seen before.

I fell in love immediately and began wearing them only at home.

I hated wearing kimonos, I really don't like that there really isn't anything to cover up your bottom. So, underneath my kimono I wore these things called "booty shorts" which was one of the things my father gave to me. I felt more at ease with them on and a white tank top.

It made me feel at home, honestly. I stood up and brushed off any dirt that still lingered on me, picked up the basket and was on my way again.

As I walked deeper into the forest, it seemed as though the trees kept on getting closer and closer. The thought of that sent a shiver down my spine.

A flock of crows flew my way and that scared me so I fell backwards, the basket slipping from my hand and landing on a nearby bush.

Luckily, none of its contents were spilled.

I sighed in relief, but as I was about to get up, I saw something glow in the depths of Mibu Forest.

The glowing eyes, I believe got closer with every breath I took.

_The rumors were true! Mibu Forest really is haunted! _

I smacked my head.

_Idiot. Do ghosts glow or make rough panting sounds? Wait. Panting?

-

I scrutinized closely at the thing approaching, first I saw paws, then I saw black fur...

A wolf.

I quickly moved myself back. But I sense that it wasn't a lone wolf.

As if right on cue, more came to join, 3, 6, 7...

There were 8 total, all varying in different sizes and colors which I find very strange. The large black wolf leaped towards me.

I gasped at the sight, it almost looked like it was flying. It landed right in front of me and I finally saw what was making the faint glow: it's eyes.

The wolf's eyes were a beautiful shade of purple. I caught myself mesmerized by its beauty only until the owner of those magnificent eyes made a low growling sound.

I shot my head back.

_Don't lose yourself Chizuru! _I thought to myself. My hand clutched the ground tightly, grabbing up handfuls of dirt.

I looked behind the black wolf and saw 2 other wolves walking towards me...

Or rather the basket of food the was lying on the bush.

The larger one of the 2 wolves had sort of a chocolate color fur with light blue eyes, while what seemed like the smallest wolf of the pack, had light brown fur with rusty yellow eyes.

The bigger wolf barked something at the smaller wolf and he -I think it's a he- growled in response.

My eyes widened.

_They were probably going to take the food! I can't let that happen, my friend put all her soul to making those goodies! _

But the black wolf was still in my face...

A light bulb went off in my head.

I got an idea.

I grabbed a handful of dirt and flung it right at the black wolf's eyes.

It howled in annoyance and leapt back.

I ran to the basket of goodies, but only to be beaten by 2 other wolves: a large wolf with bark colored fur and emerald eyes and a slightly smaller wolf with navy blue fur and blue eyes.

I was trapped.

I heard paw steps running from behind me.

Turning around was a big mistake as I saw the large black wolf with the now dirty purple eyes leapt on top of me.

I landed on the ground with a thud and I must've hit my head against a rock because a pain shot out and the next thing I knew, I blacked out.

* * *

><p>Whew, that took a while to write o.o. Yeah sorry for all that descriptive-ness, but you know how it goes, every intro to everything is always long and boring. Aaanyways, this is my first fanfic o(^_^)o! So if there was any mistakes, fell free to criticize (but not too harsh 'kay?) Will definitely continue this story so stay tuned ;)

**The wolves are based on hair color and eye color of the characters
-Hint Hint- ^.^**

2. Telling Secrets with the Wolves

Telling Secrets with the Wolves

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>I felt a cold wetness touch my face. I blinked open my eyes, slowly bringing in my hand to my cheek. Water.<p>

I pushed myself up but then an immense pain shot through my head.

"Ow..." I touched the back of my head, surprised to feel a cloth wrapped around it.

My hair was no longer in that perfect bun, but was hanging limp on my shoulders.

I panicked.\_ Where was father's silver pins?\_ I looked around wildly only to realize that they were carefully placed next to me on a big leaf.

I sighed in relief. If I had lost them father would've... I shuddered at the thought.

I propped myself up in a sitting position and examined my surroundings. Walls were seen all around me, covered with thick layers of rock and hanging above me were stalactites. A cave.

"Okay this is a bad time to be claustrophobic." I muttered.

I heard a faint howling sound coming from what I thought was the entrance of the cave. "I guess this cave was deeper than I thought." I said aloud, confident that there was no one here but me.

But then I heard a low barking sound that sounded like laughter coming from the entrance of the cave.

I quickly stood up, finally realizing that my beautiful kimono was all tattered and ripped. You could see the white tank top clearly now, the top of my kimono was completely teared off.

But not past the tank top thank god. Well now the kimono was useless so I ripped the bottom half of my kimono and threw it on the ground revealing my black booty shorts.

The barking laughter grew louder.

I took a few steps back as I was approached by the large bark colored wolf with the emerald eyes. The next thing that happened I couldn't believe it with my own two eyes.

One minute, it was a wolf standing before me, now it was a man. My eyes widened. He was taller than me by a few inches with the same color hair as the wolf had been and the same emerald eyes. He had on a brown kimono with green pants.

"You sure it's okay to strip with a guy here?" he snickered.

My face turned bright red. "W-well I wouldn't call that a complete strip... Wait a minute, your not even a man are you?!" I shot back at him.

He smiled. "Care to find out if I am?"

My eyes widened and I shook my head fast.

He laughed. "Now why don't you tell me what you were doing in Mibu Forest?"

I took a step back. "Why would I tell you anything you... you monster!"

He looked at me amused, "Heh, you sure have the guts to talk back to the guy who carried you back here."

I glared at him "Says the guy who kidnapped me!" He put on a wolfish grin.

"Oh really?"

I saw a blur and suddenly his face was inches away from mine.

My heart began to beat faster. He leaned in closer and whispered.

"Hey, you wanna know a little secret?" My eyes must've shown fear in them, because he laughed softly.

"Tell you what, I'll tell you my biggest secret if you tell me your name."

I opened my mouth to speak. "J-just my name?"

He put on a lazy smile. I swallowed. "Y-Yukimura Chizuru..."

"So Chizuru-chan, then?"

I nodded slowly. Wait a minute.... "Why are you trying to get friendly with me?"

He didn't change his expression. "Is that wrong?"

I shook my head. "It's just strange to me that a kidnapper would want to know their victim better..." I sighed.

"Wait! We made a deal! So you should tell me your secret!"

He grinned mischievously. "You sure you want to know?"

I put on a brave face. "I don't like breaking promises or deals." He leaned in towards my ear, I stiffened. I felt his cool breath in my ear as he whispered. "I'm a virgin."

What... WHAAT?!

\* \* \*

><p><strong>I just realized that these chapters are really short... (they looked long to me before Dx). So I'll try to make Chapter 3 a little longer for you guys! I had this chapter done already but I couldnt upload it cause of my homeworking -.-; Man I hate procrastinating (Thats how you spell it right?). o.o;<strong>

### 3. A Name Game with the Wolves

\*\*A Name Game with the Wolves\*\*

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>I jumped away from him only to trip on my own feet and landing on the cold, hard floor. He burst out laughing, clutching his stomach as I stared at him in embarrassment.<p>

"W-why would you tell me that?!" I squealed.

He wiped away a tear, still laughing, "Sorry, sorry! But that was just too damn funny!"

I pouted and looked away. He put on his wolfish grin again, "I'm Okita Souji, forget that name and I might just kill you."

I nodded slowly and stood back up, "Y-yes Okita-san."

"Hey Souji! Stop harassing that poor girl already!"

Okita turned around and sighed. "Oh come on Hijikata-san, I was just having some fun."

I looked at who Okita-san was talking too, it was a man with long dark hair tied up in ponytail, in a purple kimono. But that wasn't the thing that stood out the most, it was his eyes.

The same mesmerizing purple that the black wolf had given me. My eyes widened. Wait... if I just saw Okita-san turn from a wolf to a human than that must mean..._

I began to back away slowly from them.

Hijikata-san must've seen me back away because he pointed his glare to me, then back at Okita-san.

"Souji don't tell me you did the _thing_ in front of this girl."

Okita-san smiled and placed his hands behind his head. "And what if I did, Hijikata-san? You think she'll rat out on us?" Okita-san turned his gaze towards me.

"But if she did, you know I'll kill her in an instant."

I gulped. Hijikata-san sighed and started to walk towards me. I panicked. "S-stay away from me you were--"

Suddenly Hijikata-san's face looked... scary. No, more than scary, it was like being glared at by the demon from hell!

"Don't you dare say that word!" he shouted.

I flinched. "What... word?"

He glared at me even more. "You know very well what word I'm talking about!"

I looked at him with a confused face then it got replaced with a sly one.

"Ohh that word huh? Hmm, what's wrong with the word--"

Hijikata-san shouted. "DON'T YOU EVEN DARE--"

I leaned forward and whispered. "Werewolf."

His eyes widened and I could see a vein pop out of his forehead. He turned around and stormed out of the cave, it only took me a second to see him shrink down to his wolf form, then he ran out of the cave.

Okita-san looked at me with a surprised look and then burst out laughing again.

"Man Chizuru-chan! I've never thought that anyone could say that word to Hijikata-san without getting beat into a pulp!"

Actually, I was afraid that if he ever came back I would get beaten into a pulp. I waved at him and put on an innocent smile.

"Um Okita-san? You know I still want to know what this is all about."

He stopped laughing and copied my look. "Oh really?"

I nodded politely. " Mind telling me?"

He cocked his head to one side. "Eh, you sure you wanna know?"

I nodded.

"Really sure?"

"Yes."

"Positively sure?"

"Yep."

"Almost sure?"

I snapped, "Oh my god just spill it already!"

He put on his fox grin, "'Kay."

I sighed, "Thank yo-"

"As soon as everyone gets back from their hunting trip."

"SON OF A-"

* * *

><p>I was sitting with my back pressed up against the cold wall of the cave as I waited for everyone to file in.</p>

I looked around me and tried to remember the faces of these men.

Kondou Isami was the leader of this group of men who called themselves: the Wolves of Mibu. Which seemed pretty funny considering that they were wolves in Mibu Forest...

Anyways, Kondou-san had sort of a lighter shade of black hair with cloudy yellow eyes. He had on a black kimono.

The deputy commander was called Sannan-san, but he wasn't here at the moment, Kondou-san told me that he went on a solo mission after I arrived here to go investigate a new type of medicine.

Hijikata Toshizo was vice-commander and was still off sulking somewhere because of today's earlier "incident".

Apparently, Hijikata-san gets pissed off when someone says that word. Okita-san told me that Hijikata-san thought that the word was a way to insult his warrior pride or something like that.

He also told me that it was either I was girl or it was pure luck that Hijikata-san hadn't given me a beating.

I'd say it was pure luck. It seemed like Hijikata-san would even beat up an old women if he caught her saying that word.

I've already met Okita-san, so the person sitting next to him was... Saito Hajime.

He had long navy blue hair that was also in a ponytail and it was resting on his left shoulder. His eyes were also navy blue. He wore an expressionless face that made me wonder if he had any feelings at all.

That made me more suspicious. I sighed, maybe he will show off his true colors soon.

I glanced over at the far side of the cave and saw -who I thought- was the troublesome trio: Toudou Heisuke, Harada Sanosuke, and Nagakura Shinpachi.

Toudou-san looked about my age with his long light brown hair in a ponytail that almost reaches his back and his teal eyes.

Harada-san had a rusty shade of red hair -also in a ponytail- and golden eyes.

The last of the trio was Nagakura-san, with his chocolate-brown hair that was held up by a green bandana and light blue eyes.

_Well that was all of them, hopefully I can remember all of their names... Wait. Why bother? I'm gonna leave this place as soon as Hijikata-san gets back. _

Oh that reminds me, where was that basket?

"Um, did any of you see a basket with a pink bow on the handle? I had it with me before."

Saito-san was the one who spoke. "I believe you are referring to the basket that was sitting in front of you this whole time."

"Eh?" I looked down.

"..."

Oh. My face burned with embarrassment. "I-I'm sorry for asking a stupid question.

I mean, I was too busy trying to match a name to a face that I guess I wasn't paying attention."

"Ah, don't sweat it Chizuru! Oh, you do know who I am right?" Toudou-san asked.

I nodded, "Toudou-san."

He nodded. "That's right, but enough with the 'Toudou-san', just call me Heisuke! Everyone here does!"

I looked away shyly. "Heisuke-kun then?" Heisuke looked happy right then and there.

Harada-san and Nagakura-san both looked at Heisuke-kun with a grin.
"Hey Heisuke, you already falling for Chizuru-chan?"

We both looked at Nagakura-san. "WHAT? NO!"

I glanced at Heisuke-kun and he glanced at me.

"I MEAN..." We both looked away embarrassed.

Kondou-san laughed. "Now now, men, don't give Chizuru a hard time."

I looked at Kondou-san. "Um, Kondou-san? Thank you for treating my head wound."

I touched the back of my head, it doesn't hurt as much anymore.

He nodded.

"Well, I was wondering if I could leave now. I'm kind of in a hurry."

At that moment, everyone looked at me with a solemn expression.

Kondou-san was the one to break the silence. "I'm sorry Chizuru, but I'm afraid that we can't let you go."

My eyes widened. "What? Why not?"

"Well, it's kind of hard to explain. You see-"

"He means that you can't leave this place."

I turned around to see a large black wolf: Hijikata-san. Then he turned into his human form.

His eyes were closed and he said. "Your stuck here. Forever."

* * *

><p>-Gasp!- A cliffhanger! T_T Sorry to keep you guys hanging here but don't worry, I'll try to finish Chapter 4 by tomorrow. Thanks for reading! d(*3*)

4. Realizing the Truth with the Wolves

Realizing the Truth with the Wolves

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>My heart stopped. "What? Stop making up crap!" He continued to glare at me, "You think I'm the kind of guy who does that?" Kondou-san frowned, "Stop it Toshi. Let's just explain this to her." Hijikata-san took his word seriously and sighed.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>I sat, facing every member of the Wolves of Mibu, my heart

pounding in my chest.<p>

\_What was I going to hear?\_

Kondou-san cleared his throat and began. "Well Yukimura, you may have already realized that we are indeed, not regular humans. We have been placed under a thousand-year old curse that have prevented us from leaving Mibu Forest during certain times. It also forces us to transform into wolves."

I listened carefully. "But what does that have to do with me not leaving?"

Hijikata-san looked at me. "Anyone who goes into Mibu Forest, is also effected by the curse. That's why we made up rumors about the creatures of Mibu Forest." I bowed my head.

"So I can never leave here..."

The other men looked away, trying not to sense the utter sadness of this lost girl.

\_I'll be stuck here forever... This curse is... Oh I guess I'll transform into a wolf too...\_ My head shot up. "D-does that mean I'll start craving for animal meat?"

Kondou-san cocked his head to the side. "Hmm? What do you mean?"

I looked at the ground. "I mean, does this curse turns me into a wolf?" Silence filled the room until Hijikata-san coughed.

"Not quite. You're just prevented from leaving, that's all."

I sighed in relief. \_Thank god... wait that still means I'm stuck here!\_ I looked up at everyone. "I understand your situation, but have any of you tried to break the curse?"

Heisuke-kun put both of his hands behind his head. "It's not like we have any reliable resources in Mibu Forest."

Oh, I forgot about that.

"Now then, if you're gonna live with us, you'll have to abide to our rules, got it?" Hijikata-san asked me.

I nodded. "Yes."

I figured they would offer me protection and help me survive in this forest of who knows what's out there. \_I guess I'll have to get used to sleeping on the ground and eating grass.\_

It was until Kondou-san gave a dry cough that made me come back to the present. "Um Yukimura? Are you sure you can survive long in those clothing?"

"What?" I looked down and sure enough, I was still in my white tank top and black booty shorts. My face flushed red. "U-uh yeah. I'm sure I'll survive."

Kondou-san coughed again, Hijikata-san frowned, Okita-san put on his

fox grin, Saito-san blushed slightly keeping that cool expression, Heisuke-kun looked away equally embarrassed, Harada-san smiled at me, and Nagakura-san chuckled.

I sighed heavily, I guess this is my new life now with all these men. How awkward can that be?

\* \* \*

><p>I decided to go take a bath in the nearby lake.</p>

Hey, after being told that you had to stay with a group of men who were under a thousand-year old curse, and can turn into wolves, its nice to just relax and have some alone time.

They were kind enough to give me back my basket, but all it's contents were gone courtesy of Heisuke-kun and Nagakura-san, the only things left was the large pink cloth and pink bow. I took the cloth with me to the lake and thanked the gods that I had it with me or else I would have nothing to dry myself with.

I took the pink bow and tied my hair up with it. After all the tedious walking on the rocky path, I made it to the lake.

I placed the cloth on top of which seemed like the biggest rock there and looked around to see if anyone was watching.

When it seemed like the coast was clear, I took off my clothing and wrapped the cloth -which I will now call an official towel- around my body. I sighed to myself that I can no longer use any of the bath accessories that father got me from the States. \_Oh come on girl! Pull yourself together!\_

I shook my head in frustration and took two steps when I noticed a shadow behind a tree on my right.

I backed away and called out.

"Who's there?" The figure didn't move at all and that annoyed me. I took a somewhat large stone and chucked it at the figure.

It gave a high-pitched yelp and jumped right next to the large rock.

A wolf.

I immediately flushed red, I examined the wolf's fur coloring to see who it was.

"Is... Is that you Saito-san?"

Of all the wolves out there, Saito had to be the one who had seen me strip. Saito the wolf gave me a surprised look and suddenly changed back into his human form.

I squealed and pressed my hands to my cheek. "Ahh Saito! Why did you choose to change back at this time?!"

He raised his hands up and began to turn red, even redder than me. "Y-your mistaken! I just arrived here not too long ago!"

I sniffed. "You didn't see me strip?"

He quickly shook his head. I sighed then realized something. "H-hold on! Why did you change back to human form?"

He looked away, the red now being replaced by pink. "I thought it would be rude to talk to you in my other form. Why I am here is because I patrol this area at exactly this time."

I looked at him. "Oh... I'm sorry I yelled at you!" I stood up and bowed, my hands wrapped around my midsection to keep the towel from falling. Saito-san also bowed back,

"I'm so sorry that I have intruded on your... Um... Privacy."

He began to walk away. I held out one hand. "Wait!"

He didn't turn around but said, "Yes?"

\_What am I doing? He was just doing his job and I happened to be here at that time. I don't want to make a first bad impression.\_

I opened my mouth to speak. "U-um, I was wondering if you could stay here with me?"

He turned around, a surprised expression on his face. "Is there a reason why?"

I pressed my two pointer fingers together. "Well I just... Wanted someone here. It seems lonely with just me being here, the fact that I have always lived alone doesn't help either..."

He took a moment to think about it and then changed to his wolf form.

"Alright, I'll keep an eye out for any danger."

I gave him a mischievous smile.

"No peeking alright?"

Saito-san's tail flicked back and forth. "Of course." He bounded up the hill he came from and sat down with his back to me, but is still in view from the lake.

I smiled at his wolf form which his tail is still twitching due to his uncomfortableness. I made my way down to the lake, let my towel drop, and jumped in with a splash.

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><p><strong>I'm starting school again tomorrow T\_T so i won't be able to upload the chapters earlier. Sorry! I'll try to upload them A.S.A.P! :O<strong>

## 5. Having Dinner with the Wolves

\*\*Having Dinner with the Wolves\*\*

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>After I finished my bath in the lake, I followed Saito-san on his patrol which lasted about 10 minutes.<p>

"This is what you call a dinner?"

I looked at the dead rabbit in front of me, lying on a large leaf.

Everyone was in their wolf form so that made me feel awkward. Okita-san lifted his head up, his muzzle covered with animal blood.
"You want mine then?"

"Err, I'm fine thanks."

He shrugged and went back to tearing up his share of the rabbit.

Nagakura-san grinned at me. "Hey your lucky Chizuru-chan. You got the head!"

With a disgusted face, I looked at my "dinner".

The rabbit's head was as big as my fist, it's waxy eyes staring at me. I covered my mouth. "I don't eat food that stares at me."

Everyone laughed, I blushed. "If you don't mind, someone else can have my share. I had a big lunch earlier."

Heisuke's face lit up.

"Really?!"

Nagakura-san looked at Heisuke-kun.

"Now, now Heisuke, I'm a bigger wolf so I gotta eat more!"

Heisuke stood up on all fours.

"Well I'm still growing you old man!"

I felt the electricity boil over the two wolves. "Um... Guys?..."

I saw Harada-san walk over and stepped on both their paws, they howled in pain.

"Hey Sano-san! Why'd you do that?!" Heisuke growled.

Harada-san flicked his red, bushy tail. "No man should argue over a women's food."

I laughed nervously.

Yeah, this is getting way out of hand.

Harada turned around and faced me. "Hey wanna come with me for a second?"

I cocked my head to the side.

"Eh?"

Nagakura-san raised up his paw to his mouth. "What's this about Sano?"

Harada looked behind his shoulders.

"It won't take too long. Hey Hijikata-san, I'll be stepping out for a bit."

Hijikata looked up from his meal. "Fine with me. Just make sure to bring back some extra moss for Chizuru's bed."

Harada nodded and walked over to me. He pressed his nose lightly on my arm.

"Come on, Chizuru."

I nodded, slightly confused as to why Harada-san was taking me out this late.

I stood up and followed Harada out of the cave.

* * *

><p>"It's so beautiful at night."</p>

I looked up at the sky and took in the sights of the glittering stars.

Harada chuckled. "Well since living here, I've never took the time to appreciate nature. It's life or death out here for us."

I looked back down.

"..."

I suddenly realized the life I took for granted.

Father would always give me foreign things that I would just store in my house.

But here was Harada-san and the rest of the guys fighting everyday, not knowing when, even the next day could be their last.

Guilt was chewing away at me in the pit of my stomach.

Harada-san noticed my silence and said.

"It's nothing to worry about Chizuru! We do these things all the time! Plus, with the instincts of our wolve self, it makes survival easier!"

I looked at him and forced a smile on my face.

Harada looked ahead and began to wag his tail. "We're here."

My eyes gazed at the beautiful sight in front of me.

A field of flowers stretched far beyond the eye could see, in the center of this fairy tale, was a big Sakura tree, it's petals falling gracefully to the ground.

I pressed my hands together.

"Uwah! This is beautiful!"

I glanced next to me but Harada wasn't there. "Eh? Harada-san?"

I heard a bark and saw Harada-san a few feet in front of me.

"I'll race ya!", he shouted and sprinted towards the Sakura tree.

My competitive side came out and I ran to catch up to him. I laughed as I ran, _I haven't been this happy in a long time!_

Unfortunately, Harada-san beat me to Sakura tree and collapsed at the base. I ran up to him and fell in next to him.

"Hey that wasn't fair! Wolves run faster than humans!"

He panted heavily. "Well it looks like a certain human needs to work out more!"

I laughed.

Harada looked at me, a smile forming at his lips. "There you go Chizuru. You need to smile more."

"Eh?" I suddenly took interest on the ground.

Harada barked happily. We continued to watch the petals dance around us.

"Um, Harada-san?"

"What?"

I glanced over at the red wolf. "Did you... did you bring me here to cheer me up?"

He looked surprised at my question and then smiled. "You seemed to be taking this curse thing seriously. So why not have a chance to relax before Hijikata-san makes you pick up our manure."

I wrinkled my nose. "Really?"

He laughed. "Who knows."

Silence once again filled the area.

The breeze picked up, scattering the petals, making it dance around us. I rubbed my bare arms

"Ooh, it's getting chilly out here. Let's go back Harada-san."

He scooted closer to me, his soft fur brushing against my arm. I stared at him, astonished. "Um. Harada-san?"

He looked up at me. "Don't worry, I'll keep you warm.", then chuckled softly, "Another advantage of this body."

My cheeks heated up. "A-are you sure?"

...

"Harada-san?"

I glanced down at him, eyes closed with his chest rising and falling.

He's asleep. I smiled softly, and nervously placed my hand on his head.

I'm surprised how soft a wolf's head is.

I looked up at the night sky and prayed that nothing will ever happen to my new friends: the Wolves of Mibu.

* * *

><p>Aaand another chapter done. ;^_^

Next Chapter: Cooking Lessons with the Wolves

6. Cooking Lessons with the Wolves

Cooking Lessons with the Wolves

~~~

>"... I think you guys need someone else to do the cooking."<p>

The morning sun was out and watching Hijikata-san the wolf tearing apart the leg of a deer wasn't exactly a pleasant sight to see.

Okita -in human form- was leaning against the entrance of the cave next to me, tying his hair up.

"What cooking? We're wolves. We eat whatever we kill."

I turned to look at him and pointed to myself. "In case you haven't noticed, I get squeamish whenever I look at blood, so it doesn't really apply to me."

Okita-san crossed his arms. "True. Hmm this really is a problem. Maybe you'll have to learn how to live off of insects."

I gasped. "Really?"

Hijikata-san spat out the limb of the deer that was in his mouth. "Cut it out Souji. She'll just have to learn how to make food with the things we catch."

Okita-san put on his wolfish grin. "Heh, I didn't know you were a food expert, Hijikata-san."

Hijikata flicked his tail impatiently. "I didn't say that I was."

"So what could you make before you changed into a wolf?"

Hijikata-san bowed his furry head and muttered. "Does putting noodles in a boiling pot count?"

Okita and I stared at him, then Okita-san burst out laughing.

"Oh man! The Hijikata Toshizo? Mr. Demon commander? And you can't even cook?!"

Hijikata barred his fangs at us. "Watch it."

I covered my mouth to hide my smile.

"Hey! Souji!"

All three of us turned to see who it was.

A small light brown wolf bounded up to us. Heisuke.

"It's time for our patrol!" he barked.

Okita sighed. "Fine. 'Later Chizuru-chan."

He shrunk down to his wolf form and sped off with Heisuke into the forest. That only left me and Hijikata-san.

"Well, I better bring this big guy in." he indicated to the deer.

I went over to him. "Um you need help carrying it?"

He morphed back to his human form. "I'm fine thanks."

I stared at the ground, "Oh."

I want to be useful to them. Hijikata-san hasn't assigned me any roles yet, but maybe I can prove my worth.

"Um. Hijikata-san!"

He lifted the deer onto his shoulder. "What?"

My gaze dropped to the ground. "W-well, earlier you said that you couldn't cook, so I was wondering if you would like some cooking lessons."

That totally sounded lame.

Hijikata sighed and brought his other free hand to his face.

"You don't have to put it like that."

I shut my eyes tight.

"But I suppose you can give me a few tips. Just keep it a secret from the guys."

My face lit up and I bowed my head. "Thank you very much!"

\* \* \*

><p>"Ehh there isn't much to cook with."</p>

I looked around the cave that was located near the main one. The only thing found in that cave was a few spices and different colored berries, stacked up on shelves carved from the cave itself.

Plus the deer Hijikata-san brought in.

Hijikata shrugged and picked up what seemed like a raspberry.

"We only rely on our wolf form for survival. That's why no one has been in this... Um... Kitchen for a while. Although, when we first got into this mess, Saito did all the cooking..."

I sighed, this was going to be harder than I thought.

I clenched my fist. "All right. Here's what we'll do: first we need to try to make some kitchen supplies. Sorry but I can't cook with just my hand."

Hijikata crossed his arms.

I continued. "Next, we need more ingredients to store for later and that will mean going out into the forest to get some."

Hijikata-san looked thoughtful for a moment. "Well? Need anything else?"

I tapped my finger on my chin.

"Hmm. Oh right! Do you guys have any rice? I can't live off of meat you know."

He scratched his nose with his finger.

"There was a rice field when we first moved in, but no one has tended to it since then."

"Okay I'll go check that out."

Hijikata-san placed one hand on his hip.

"Hey you do realize that you're going to cook for wolves, right? Wolves can't hold up chopsticks."

I smiled at him.

"I've already thought it out. I've noticed that you guys only eat in your wolf form. So I thought that maybe I can cook for your human form in the morning and you guys can hunt for your food in the evening."

His eyes widened for a moment, but then closed with a smile on his face.

"Heh, I guess you aren't so stupid after all."

"Huh? That's mean Hijikata-san!" I pouted.

He said nothing as he made his way to the entrance. "Go find Saito and join him on his patrol, while you do that, look around for any spices you might need. Oh, and give the rice field a check."

"Um. What about the utensils?"

He looked over his shoulders. "Don't worry. They'll be ready when you get back."

Confused, I took his word for it.

\* \* \*

><p>I found Saito-san napping against a big pine tree. His hands clasped around a katana that layed on his chest.</p>

He looked so innocent like that, his face was relaxed and not carrying any seriousness to it.

I heard a small chirp and noticed two tiny green birds perched on his shoulder. It seemed like these birds took an interest in Saito.

Everytime I saw Saito-san, I would see two tiny shapes fly by his head.

I smiled and then suddenly noticed that I was still staring at Saito-san.

My face grew hot and I shook my head real fast.

"S-Saito-san?" I whispered.

No answer. I leaned in closer.

"Sai-"

"I heard you the first time."

I jerked back and fell on my butt.

"Ow..."

I looked up at Saito, his eyes were turned my way and his katana was now occupying the ground.

"S-sorry!" I stood up too quickly and fell forward. I expected to feel the ground rush up to my face, but what i landed on, it was soft.

"...Is now the time to be doing these kinds of things?"

I looked up and saw Saito's face a few inches from mine. \_Oh god, I landed on top of Saito-san! \_

He looked away from my face, red rushing into his cheeks as well as

mine.

"Ahh. I'm so, so sorry!"

I jumped off and bowed my head three times. He sighed and picked up his katana.

"So your here to patrol with me."

My eyes widened, "How'd you know, Saito-san?"

He adjusted his katana to his waist. "Souji told me. Apparently he knew what was going to happen after he left the vice-commander and you alone."

My face grew hot again. "W-well shall we go now?" I tried to change the topic.

He nodded.

\* \* \*

><p>We collected a handful of herbs, spices and are now on our way to the abandoned rice farm.</p>

I heard a familiar small chirp and glanced up at the sky, one of the green birds flew by, and I saw him smile at me.

"Um, Saito-san?"

"What is it?"

I made my gaze stop at his katanas. "Why do you still carry katanas when you can fight as a wolf? The other guys keep their katanas in the den."

Saito's eyes glazed over and he looked at the sky. "I have always lived by the sword. It was what I did my whole life. But when this event happened, I felt like another part of me was taken away."

He gripped the handle of his katana. I stared at him.

"You keep your katana at your side to remind you of those days you had."

"Yeah. But now I feel like I lost that warrior spirit that was inside of me. My katana was that spirit, and now I've lost it."

He placed his hand on his chest and continued to look at the sky.

I couldn't take it anymore. I grabbed his other hand with both of mine and held it close.

"That's not true! A weapon doesn't make a man who he is! It's how he feels about himself to others! Saito-san is very kind to me and the other members, you put yourself last and others first, I think that's a true warrior at heart!"

He looked at me surprised. "You're crying."

"Eh?"

I brought one hand to my cheek and felt the sticky, wet tears coming down.

Saito-san lifted his other hand up to my cheek and gently slid it over the tears.

"...Saito-san..."

He smiled at me. "You are a strange girl. But I see why your words make sense to me. No matter what weapon I carry, that doesn't change me on who I am."

I smiled back at him.

"Yes."

I let go of his hand, realizing that I still held on to it. "Um, sorry about that. I guess I overreacted."

He chuckled softly. "Come on, let's go check on those rice fields."

I nodded my head.

"Saito-san?"

"Yes?"

"Can you cook well?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Well, Hijikata-san said that you used to cook for the Wolves of Mibu when you all got affected by the curse."

"I lived by myself before I got to know them. So I taught myself."

"Hey, we should both teach Hijikata-san how to cook other things than noodles in boiling water."

"Huh? He can't cook?"

"Oops, I wasn't supposed to tell anyone."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Next Chapter: Fixing a Broken Heart with the Wolves<strong>

## 7. Fixing a Broken Heart with the Wolves

\*\*Fixing a Broken Heart with the Wolves\*\*

When I got back from my patrol with Saito-san, I found Hijikata-san curled up in the den sound asleep.

"I guess I'll teach him tomorrow." I laughed silently to myself and stepped out.

The sun was beginning to set, the red, yellow, and orange casting its colors down onto Mibu Forest.

"Pretty..."

I heard a twig snap and I jerked my head to the sound.

I saw Heisuke disappear into the trees.

"Where could he be going when dinner was coming up?"

Being the curious person I am, I followed him.

Trees loomed overhead, covering up the sunset. A breeze came and went, leaving me with goosebumps on my arms. I put my arms around me and shivered.

I peeked up at Heisuke, his long hair was swishing back and forth and his hands were balled up in a fist.

\_Is he upset about something? \_I frowned, I didn't like seeing my friends sad.

Suddenly he went into a sprint, kicking up leaves as he flew by.

Surprised, I ran after wind picked up and the trees moved violently, threatening to fall at any time.

Heisuke shouted and I saw his figure change into a wolf.

With his wolf ability, he ran faster, and so did I.

I saw him leap over a boulder with ease.

\_If I want to go help him, I gotta jump that rock too! \_

I sped up, my arms pumping at my side and pushed my self up. Time seemed to move slower as I flew through the air.

\_So this is how it feels to fly! \_My eyes widened in excitement. I landed upwards, but the pressure on my feet gave way, and I fell face down on the forest floor.

"Oof!"

...

"Chizuru?!"

I looked up and spat out the dirt in my mouth, Heisuke was running towards me. He shifted into his human form and skidded to a stop next to me.

He kneeled down and took my hand. "A-are you alright, Chizuru?"

I stuck my tongue out and blew a raspberry in an attempt to get the

last of the dirt off.

Heisuke stared at me and then broke into a laugh.

"H-Heisuke-kun?"

He pulled me up and wrapped his arms around his stomach, shaking with laughter.

"What was that all about?"

I brushed the leaves off my leg and winced. "Owie!"

I pulled my hand away from my knee and found blood smeared all over. I trembled at the sight of my blood.

Heisuke noticed my leg wound and rushed over. "Ahh, Chizuru! Your hurt!"

\_No kidding. \_

"Its fine, really. Just a scratch."

He took my hand and started to walk.

"H-Hesiuke?! Wh-where are we going?"

I was desperately trying to ignore the pain, but it burns!

He looked over his shoulder. "Its my fault your hurt so I'm going to take responsibility for it."

"Y-you don't have to do that!"

The lake was coming into view, the moon reflecting its image on the surface.

We walked down to the lake and he suddenly picked me up bridal style.

"H-Heisuke?!" My face went hot. Heisuke smiled.

"Chizuru, are you blushing?"

I gripped his shoulders. "I-I am not!"

He laughed and set me down on the big rock. "Wait right here, Chizuru." he told me and then ran down the slope towards the lake.

I saw him tear a part of his shirt and dipped it into the lake. He rinsed out most of the water and ran back up to me.

Heisuke kneeled down on one foot and gently dabbed the cloth on my knee.

"Ow!" I quickly covered my mouth.

Heisuke jerked back. "I-I'm sorry!" He placed the cloth back on the wound and I winced in pain.

The blood was gone when he lifted the cloth off of my knee, but it left a chunk of skin missing from my knee.

His eyes widened. "Ahh! I am sooo sorry!"

He bowed his head. I waved my hand desperately. "N-no! I fell, that's all!"

He looked up at me. "I will fix this Chizuru, don't worry."

I cocked my head to the side. \_Hows he going to fix that scar? \_

He suddenly shifted into his wolf form and bent his head towards my knee.

"Don't move Chizuru. This might hurt a bit, but please don't scream."

I nodded, still confused.

He opened his mouth and bit into my knee. My head jerked back and I covered my mouth.

The pain was intense! My whole leg has gone numb and my breathing accelerated.

After what seemed like hours he lifted his head off my knee. I looked down, expecting to see bite marks, but what surprised me was that there were none. Even the wound was gone!

Specks of blood covered my knee and Heisuke moved his head closer.

"Let me clean that up." He started to lick up the blood.

\_His tongue tickles! \_I stifled back a laugh.

"All done."

I raised my leg up and it looked good as new. "Heisuke, how'd you do that?"

He shifted back into his human form. "Our wolf teeth have special healing powers when we bite into something. But it won't heal what's already been dead."

He sat down next to me and looked at the sky. I glanced at him.

"Why were you running before?"

He said nothing.

A flock of birds flew across the lake, the waves rippled in harmony.

"I didn't choose this life for me."

He stared at his clenched hands. "We've been here for half a year now and still no sign of the curse breaking. You know what my dream was

before this madness?"

I looked away, not wanting to see his hurt eyes.

"It was to travel the world, see all kinds of places and people." He sighed, "But it doesn't look like \_that's \_going to happen anytime soon."

He broke off a flower and twirled it in his fingers. "I was trying to see if I could escape this curse by trying to run as fast as I could towards the barrier. But as soon as something touches it, they turn into dust."

He looked thoughtful for a moment. "But I still wanted to see if it would work. My life here has no meaning."

I looked at him and slapped him hard across the cheek. The flower flew out of his hands as he reached up to his face.

"Chizuru..."

"What are you talking about?! You have good friends that you live with and \_has \_been with you from the beginning! You say that your life has no meaning, but your wrong! Every living thing has a purpose in life, that's why they were created in the first place! You have the guys that laugh with you, hunted with you, and shedded blood with you! You have \_them. \_and you have \_me.\_"

Heisuke suddenly threw his arms around me and layed his head on my shoulder.

"Chizuru... you're trying to cheer me up right?"

Tears poured out of my eyes.

"Thank you. I feel better now, so don't cry." He pushed me back, I quickly wiped my tears away and smiled at him.

"I wasn't crying."

He put both his hands behind his head. "Oh? Well you know what will make me even happier? A kiss."

I held up a fist.

"Next time, how 'bout I punch you instead of a slap?"

He grinned at me and picked up the flower he dropped. "H-here then. It's for you."

I accepted the flower and a warm smile spread across my face. "Thank you, Heisuke."

We both looked up at the night sky, stars shining like diamonds.

I almost didn't catch what Heisuke whispered.

"Thank you."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Sorry that I haven't updated in a loong time! T\_T But I had exams this week. Anyways, I'm making up a new series! Still continuing this one though so don't worry! Same genre: "Hakuoki", but a whole new story line! I just thought of this story when I was fooling around at school :D. Uploading my new story, "Love Potion" look forward to it ;).<strong>

## 8. Side Story : Saito's Explanation

\*\*Side Story : Saito's Explanation\*\*

Chizuru: Hey Saito-san.

Saito: What?

Chizuru: When you shift forms, do your clothes just fuse into your wolf fur?

Saito: ... Why do you ask?

Chizuru: U-um...

Saito: Do you really want to know?

Chizuru: Well I'm just curious...

Saito: Fine, but prepare yourself for what you are about to hear.

Chizuru: Alright!

Saito: When we transform, our clothes completely tear off.

Chizuru: EHH?! But I never see any of you guys... Naked.

Saito: You have to really pay attention... Not that you're that kind of girl. Right?

Chizuru: ...

Saito: Yukimura? You haven't actually...

Chizuru: I can't believe you Saito-san!

Saito: Huh? What can't you beleive?... Y-you don't mean?!

Chizuru: How can you say all that with a straight face?!

Saito: ... Quit teasing me.

## 9. Play Time with the Wolves

\*\*Play Time with the Wolves\*\*

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>"I officially announce today, the first annual Mibu Games!" Nagakura

shouted with his fist in the air.<p>

All the members of Mibu were at the big Sakura Tree, either half listening or not listening at all.

"U-um, Nagakura-san? You really don't have to hold this event for me."

Its already been a week since I wandered into Mibu Forest. Nagakura-san wanted to celebrate this by holding a series of games in the forest.

"Why not, Chizuru? I want you to feel welcome here! We're basically going to be family from here on out!"

I sighed. I don't want to make a big deal out of this. Heisuke was sitting next to me, his legs spread out as he yawned. "Hey Shinpachi-san. You gonna tell us what we're gonna do or not?"

Nagakura grinned at Heisuke. "So the little man decides to speak up, eh?"

Heisuke growled. "Shut up."

Nagakura-san went over to him and ruffled his hair. "Oh? You trying to talk big?"

I sighed again and looked behind me to see Okita and Saito -in wolf form- lying next to the Sakura tree, observing what was going on.

Hijikata and Kondou were exchanging a few words with each other and Harada was snoozing beside me. I stood up and brushed the grass off my shorts. "Um, if you don't mind, I have some chores I need to do."

Nagakura switched his gaze from Heisuke to me. "Huh? No way Chizuru, you can't bail out now!"

I shuffled my bare feet, the grass tickling my calves.

Okita walked over and started to rub his head on my legs.

"O-Okita-san?!"

He grinned at me. "Come on Chi-Chi! Have some fun once in a while!"

I blushed and looked at my feet. "What's with that pet name..."

Okita barked happily and Saito came over and sat at my feet. "Since coming here, all you have ever done was work. You should relax a little."

Woah. _Coming from Saito-san, that sounded like a big deal._

I looked over at Hijikata. "Hijikata-san?" He sighed and returned my

look with an annoyed one.

"You can have a day off today."

My face lit up. "T-thank you Hijikata-san!" I bowed my head.

He waved his hands. "Ya,ya. Just be sure to get back to work tomorrow."

With that said, Nagakura-san told Heisuke, Harada, Okita, Saito, and I to race to the lake. It was all too sudden and the next thing I knew, everyone was way ahead of me.

All them shifted into their wolf form and I fumed with jealousy. "Hey! That's not fair! I'm the only human here!" I shouted to them.

They all barked in laughter but still carried themselves down to the lake.

* * *

><p>As soon as I got to the lake, my feet was all red from the running I just did with no sandals on. My bangs stuck to my forehead as sweat poured down my neck.</p>

The wolves were laying down at the shore of the lake. I walked over to them and placed my hands on my hips. "I can't believe you guys never even came back to get me! I mean look at me! I'm all sweaty and I stink!"

Harada lifted his furry head up. "Then why don't you take a bath?"

I scrutinized at him. "It's not like I can with all you guys around."

Heisuke coughed awkwardly.

Nagakura jumped up on all fours and shouted. "All right let's get this mad party started!" Everyone turned to look at Nagakura-san.

"First, we will need to pick two teams. I already decided on how we're going to do that." He shifted back into human form and took out six chopsticks.

"We'll draw chopsticks! Three of them have gold on the tip and the other three have silver on them!" Everyone morphed back into their human selves.

"Sounds easy enough." Okita said while stretching his arms out. One by one everyone picked their chopsticks, including me. Nagakura looked around and grinned.

"Now let's see who's on who's team!"

We all lifted up our chopsticks.

Looks like I'm on the silver team. Okita-san and Saito-san were also on the silver team. That left Nagakura-san, Harada-san, and

Heisuke-kun on the gold.

"Well this worked out perfectly! We both have short ones on our teams!" _D_

id he mean me? I suddenly took interest at my feet. Heisuke turned to Nagakura with his fist in the air. "Hey Shinpachi-san! Who are you calling short?!"

Nagakura-san ignored him and continued. "The first game will be horseback riding!"

I shot my head up, my eyes wide. "Y-you don't mean?!"

He grinned at me. "Know the rules already, Chizuru-chan? That makes it easy to explain! Okay, one person will sit on two people's shoulders and those two people have to try to swim to the other side of the lake without letting that one person fall!"

I took a shy glance at Okita and Saito. Me? Sitting on their shoulders?! My face reddened.

"I'm game." Okita said and then took his shirt off, leaving his chest bare.

"Doesn't look like we have a choice." Saito sighed and dropped his shirt on top of the big rock.

Harada cracked his knuckles. "Can't wait to see how this turns out!"

Heisuke and I looked at each other, not believing that we get to be the ones riding them. Nagakura walked over to Heisuke and slapped his bare back. "Up you go then!"

"Wah!"

Nagakura lifted Heisuke up with no strain at all. Harada walked over and Heisuke was placed between them.

"Hey Heisuke! Quit pulling out my hair!" Harada snapped at the boy. Heisuke was gripping Harada's head, shaking visibly.

"S-Sano-san! D-don't you dare let me fall!"

Nagakura laughed, his hand resting on Heisuke's leg. "Oh? The great Heisuke is afraid of heights?"

Poor Heisuke. Suddenly I felt arms wrap around my waist. "What what?!"

Okita gave his sing-songy laugh. "Calm down Chi-Chi!"

My legs tucked in and I squealed as Okita lifted me higher. "Chizuru, did you have to scream in my ear?"

I covered my mouth and muffled. "I'm sorry!" Saito was suddenly next to Okita and looked at me.

"If you're scared at this height, maybe you should back down now."

I shook my head. "I-it's not that I'm afraid of heights..."_ It's because Okita's touch is making my heart beat wildly!_

Okita set me down on his and Saito's shoulders. Saito looked over at Okita and Okita grinned. At the same time, they both took each of my hand and wrapped them around their neck.

"E-ehhh?! "

"Don't take it personally. This way, you won't fall off." Their hair tickled my finger tips and it was the first time I relized that it was ... Soft. _Ahh! What am I saying?! Me, on two, well built men who are shirtless!_ I blushed like crazy until I heard Saito grunt.

"Are you always this heavy?"

That's when I forgot about the shirtless part.

"Hey! I don't recall letting you comment on my weight!"

He looked away from me. Okita laughed. "Lose those pounds, Chi-Chi!"

My cheeks puffed out. _Geez, these guys._

Nagakura looked over at us. "Hey! Are you guys done flirting yet?"

My face lit up again. "We were NOT flirting!"

Okita and Saito began to walk over to them. I actually held on tighter when we started walking. We stood -or rather Saito-san and Okita-san stood- next to each other,

Heisuke was starting to look a little pale. Both teams entered the water, the waves lapping gently at their feet.

"All right are you guys ready?" Nagakura shouted. Okita and Saito both nodded in unison.

"Then... Go!"

Okita and Saito started to run, but the force of the water was making it difficult. Harada and Nagakura were also having trouble. Heisuke looked like he was about to die.

Man, we'll never make it across the lake until the next day! I sighed.

I heard a buzzing sound next to my ear and saw a bee. My eyes widened. "A-a-a b-bee!"

Okita gave a loud sigh. "Again with the screaming Chizuru?"

"... Sorry."

Then, an idea struck me. I let go of their necks. Saito looked at me in surprise. "Yukimura? What are you doing?" I let my hands wander to their backs and pointed my fingers.

"Sorry guys!"

I shot my finger out and it went right on the middle of their backs.

Both their heads jerked up and they suddenly ran at super sonic speed. I quickly grabbed onto their necks again and started to laugh.

I once overheard Hijikata-san and Kondou-san talking about how the middle of their backs is most sensitive because of their wolf form. Wind was rushing onto my face. I haven't went this fast before in my whole life and boy does it feel great!

Okita and Saito were beginning to slow down and I felt my grip loosen up. They suddenly halted to a stop and I was thrown from their shoulders.

"Ahh!"

I fell into the lake. I surfaced and glared at them.

"Okita-san, Saito-san!"

Okita scratched his head. "Hey, aren't we supposed to be mad at you? I mean, you did find out about our weak spot."

Nagakura came in next to us. "Well, I guess you guys won..."

Heisuke jumped off their shoulders and landed next to me in the water. "Oh my gosh! I felt like I was going to die!"

Harada looked at him. "You? What about the deathlock you were putting on me?!"

I laughed. Being with these guys has been fun, and it took my mind off the curse. I heard a cough from Saito and looked at him. "What's wrong, Saito-san?"

He quickly turned around. "Y-your shirt has become transparent."

Huh?! I glanced down at my chest and quickly wrapped my arms around them. "D-don't you guys even think of looking!" Everyone's eyes widened and it suddenly became awkward.

"Just go home! I'll take a bath here until my clothes dry off!" I cried out. Heisuke jumped out from the water.

"S-sorry Chizuru!" Everyone copied what Heisuke did and shifted into their wolf forms. They turned their head to look at me and I gave them my glare.

All of them spun on their heels and I saw their furry bodies retreat into the forest. Finally.

I stripped off my wet clothes and left it on top of the big rock. I sat in the water, with the waves only up to the nape of my neck. I cocked my head up to see the sun shine onto the trees, casting their

shadow. I smiled.

Maybe being stuck here isn't as bad as I thought.

"I just wished I had more clothes with me!" I shouted.

* * *

><p>"Who do you suppose that is?"</p>

A tall, red headed man asked.

The man with the red eyes ignored him and turned to leave, the sight of the girl in the lake slowly disappearing behind him. "Hmm. I never thought that a mere human would have made it past the barrier I placed around here."

His red eyes shined brightly in the dense of the forest, he smirked.

"Just who are you, Yukimura, Chizuru?"

* * *

><p>MY LONGEST CHAPTER SO FAR! :OO Thanks for all the reviews that I got, it really kept me motivated to keep writing more for you guys!

Next Chapter: Meeting a Stranger with the Wolves

Don't forget to REVIEW! v(*_*)v

10. Meeting a Stranger with the Wolves

Meeting a Stranger with the Wolves

~~~

>I was in the kitchen cave cooking up today's breakfast when I heard shouting coming from the dens.</p>

"Chizuru!"

When I heard my name being called, I rushed out to see what was going on. Every one of the wolves was outside, a look of suspicion fell across their face.

I walked over to Hijikata. "What's going on?"

He lifted his wolf nose into the air. "A stranger has just entered the forest."

My eyes widened. \_There was another human in here besides me?\_ I squatted down to Hijikata's height.

"Where are they?"

"He appears to be down by the lake-"

His last words were cut off as I ran at full speed towards the

lake.

"Chizuru!?" I heard Heisuke's voice call my name but I didn't slow down.

I need to make sure I'm not the only one stuck here!

Trees rushed passed me as I willed my legs to go on. The lake was coming into view. I spotted a silhouette standing beside the big rock, looking across the lake.

I stopped a few feet away from him, he had short blonde hair and a brown kimono, but what really caught me was the color of his eyes.

It was a mesmerizing red, almost as mesmerizing as Hijikata's eyes. He didn't turn to look at me, but I knew that he knows I'm here.

"U-um..."

His head slowly turned to look at me. My hands went behind my back. "H-hello. I'm Yukimura Chizuru."

He gave a cocky smile and walked towards me. Instincts took over as I took a step back. He noticed and stopped. "Heh. You already afraid of me when you've never met me before?"

I gulped and bowed my head. "I-I'm sorry!"

I felt fingers under my chin as it was lifted up. My eyes widened as I met up with his red eyes. It seemed to suck me into its power, my mouth opened. "Ahh..."

He smiled and brought his lips onto mine. I couldn't get away, my mind was only focused on his eyes, how it gave me a chill of pleasure as it went down my spine. I felt a sharp pain on my lip; he bit me.

He kept looking at me with those eyes, then I noticed that I was beginning to get weaker, my breathing coming out shallow.

My legs gave way and I fell onto my knees, a headache began to emerge from my head. I snapped back to reality and stared up at him.

"W-what the hell?!"

He smiled and leaned closer towards my ear.

"Kazama Chikage. You will be seeing more of me my princess, Yukimura Chizuru." I slapped him across the cheek.

"..."

"Chizuru! Are you okay?!" I looked behind Kazama and saw the wolves running towards me. Kazama noticed too and suddenly pressed his lips onto mine again.

"Mhm!" I broke the kiss and he smiled at me.

Then, he was simply just\_ gone\_.

All of the wolves saw what had happened and were in raged.

Heisuke shifted back into his human form and punched the ground.  
"Shit, who was that guy?!"

Harada walked over to me. "Shut up Heisuke, you're scaring Chizuru-chan."

He kneeled in front of me and placed a hand on my head. "You okay?"

I nodded my head slowly, still confused on what had happened.

Everyone shifted into their human forms and sat around me. I broke out crying. "I-I don't know what just happened!"

Harada pulled me into his arms. "Shh. It's okay, okay."

My fingers gripped the back of his shirt. "Harada-san... I-I'm sorry for getting your shirt wet!"

Harada laughed.

Hijikata spoke up. "Why don't we take her back to the dens so she can calm down." Kondou nodded and the rest of the men followed him back to the dens.

I rested my head on Harada's broad shoulders, my tears now dry. I felt a touch under my leg as Harada lifted me up.  
"H-Harada-san?!"

He smiled at me. "Hey, I don't like seeing a girl cry. Whoever that guy was, I'll kill him for sure."

I rubbed my head on his shoulder. "You don't have to do that for me."

"I'd do anything for you."

I looked at him. "Did you say something?" He gave a dry cough.

"N-nothing, let's just get you home."

I nodded then set my head back on his shoulders and fell asleep.

\* \* \*

><p>Something was tickling my nose.</p>

"A-achoo!"

My eyes flew open and I found myself staring at the ceiling of the dens. I rubbed my nose and saw a furry tail over my stomach.

I followed the tail to it's owner. It was Hijikata's. I poked his

tail. "U-um. Hijikata-san?"

He lifted his head and looked at me. "Oh, you're awake."

He flicked his tail up and shifted into human form. I sat up and pulled my knees together. He sat next to me.

"Were you worried about me?"

Hijikata said nothing, I began to fidget.

"I don't like seeing you hurt. You've already been with us for a week and now it feels like you're one of us."

I looked over at him. "Hijikata-san..."

He gave a soft chuckle. "Huh, I don't know why, but ever since you came here, I've been more at ease."

A breeze welcomed itself into the cave, A strand of hair fell across my face. I lifted my hand to wipe it off but I found myself touching Hijikata's hand which was already caressing my cheek.

"You know, you look better with your hair down."

My face heated up. "Y-you think so?"

Hijikata shrugged. "Women are strange beings. They do what ever it takes to get something. They can be greedy or wanting."

I narrowed my eyes. "Hey!"

Hijikata chuckled again. "But they are something a man can fight for." He looked at me straight in the eye, his violet eyes seem to glow with a warm color. I didn't know what to say. After that speech, you couldn't possibly respond with a smart comeback.

"U-um..."

He suddenly brought his hand up and moved a strand of hair behind my ear. "\_I\_ found that someone to fight for."

My heart pounded furiously, threatening to tear out of my chest.

"H-Hijikata-san..."

He pulled away and stood up, brushing the dirt away from his clothes. "Well, I better get ready for patrol."

I looked up at him. "T-thank you for taking care of me up until now!"

He sighed and gave me his glare. "Don't forget to make the dinner and if you ever mention what just happened-"

I nodded my head quickly. "I won't!"

His lips softened and then walked out of the den.

I hugged my knees and smiled. \_Hijikata-san can have a sweet side too, huh, who knew?\_

I got up and noticed something shiny next to my mattress. I bent down and saw my silver pins.

\_I haven't put my hair up in a bun for a while now...\_

I grabbed the two pins and started to arrange my hair. I slid the two pins in and looked at my reflection in the bucket of water. \_Wow, after all this time it still looks good!\_ I patted the bun and walked to the entrance of the cave.

"Hrrk!"

My headache returned and I clutched my head. \_W-why is it worse than last time?\_

My breathing came out quick and sweat poured down my neck.

"A-ahhh!"

I let out a scream and then suddenly, the pain stopped. I fell to the floor of the cave, gasping heavily.

\_ What's wrong with me?!\_ I heard a pair of footsteps coming towards me.

"Chizuru?! Why'd you scream?!"

I looked up and saw Nagakura-san with a worried expression on his face.

I shook my head. "I-It's nothing! I thought I saw a shadow in the corner of the cave. It turns out that it was mine."

Nagakura sighed. "After what happened today I'm not surprised that you're still shaken up. Just don't push yourself too hard 'kay?"

I nodded.

Nagakura smiled at me. "You look cute with a bun."

I blushed. He laughed and walked out of the cave. I sighed.

I had a strange feeling that the encounter with Kazama had something to do with my headaches, and if it was, then nothing will be the same around here again.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>So... tired... of... typing... T\_T Dont forget to review!  
(Gets motivated after just one review) ^o^</strong>

11. Side Story : Okita's Fashion Advice

\*\*Side Story : Okita's Fashion Advice\*\*

Okita: Alright Chizuru-chan! We need to do something about the clothes you're wearing.

Chizuru: Eh? What's wrong it?

Okita: Well you always wear it and it's getting kind of boring now.

Chizuru: ... This was the only thing I had with me when I entered the forest.

Okita: Hmm. Have no fear! I have the perfect thing for you!

Chizuru: Okita-san, you have women's clothes?

Okita: Well my older Sis works in the west, so she would send me her clothes to store in our house from time to time.

Chizuru: I-I see.

Okita: Oooh! Try this on!

Chizuru: Okita-san! T-thats a-

Okita: What? You don't like it?

Chizuru: T-THEAT'S NOT SOMETHING I WOULD WEAR IN PUBLIC!

Okita: Huh? What is it then?

Chizuru: IT'S A FREAKING BRA!

Okita: ... Which is what? ...

Chizuru: YOU WEAR IT ON YOUR... YOU KNOW!

Okita: Chizuru. You're turning redder.

Chizuru: T-THEAT'S BECAUSE...

Okita: But I have to admit, this lace around the top sure is sexy.

Chizuru: ... Get out of my room.

## 12. A Relaxation Day with the Wolves

\*\*A Relaxation Day with the Wolves\*\*

~~~

>The clouds moved in place to cover the moon, leaves blew over my head ruffling my hair. "Ahh. Tonight feels lovely." <p>

Two days have passed since Kazama appeared in my life. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary... _Yet_.

"Hey! Chizuru!" I looked at who called my name.

"Oh! Heisuke-kun!" He ran up to me, I noticed that his hair was down

and he was holding a towel.

"We're having a relaxation day today~!"

I cocked my head to one side.

"What do you mean?" He held out his arms.

"Hijikata-san said that since we work daily to protect our grounds, we should have a day off!"

My eyes lit up. "Good for you Heisuke! So where are you going?"

He smiled. "_We're_ going to the Mibu Hot Springs!"

I clapped my hands. "A hot spri-... WHAT?!"

Heisuke laughed. "What's the matter? Scared of being in the same pool as guys?"

I shook my head quickly. "N-no! Of course I'm not!"

Heisuke slapped me on the shoulder. "Great! I'll tell Hijikata-san you want to come!"

I extended my hand. "Wait! Heisuke-kun!"

But he was already running the other way.

My hand moved up to my mouth. _W_hat should I do?! I can't go in a hot spring with a bunch of guys! I __mean, the lake incident was an accident because Okita-san and Saito-san dropped __me into the lake, but this is different!_

I shook my head, flustered. _Maybe I'll __just tell them I'll swim at the lake. Ya, I'll do that._

I ran to catch up with Heisuke.

* * *

><p>So, I caught up with Heisuke and I was about to explain my situation but I was cut off.</p>

"Hijikata-san! Chizuru wants to come with us to the hot spring~!" He looked surprised at first, but then sighed.

"Fine, but don't make a big deal out of it."

My face reddened, "L-like I'll be making a fool out of myself."

He shrugged then stalked out of the den. Heisuke threw his fist in the air. "Yay! Chizuru's coming with us~!"

"T-that's exaggerating the situation..."

Heisuke grabbed my hand. "Come on! Let's get ready!"

I felt a tug on my hand and we were off.

* * *

><p>We met up with the other Mibu Wolves at the lake.</p>

"Huh? I thought you guys said there was a hot spring?" A towel was wrapped around my body, and my hair was tied to the side.

Okita grinned. "Oh there is one, it's right there." He pointed to the big rock.

"Okita-san that is a rock. Unless you're saying that the rock can keep you warm and that we all have to crawl on top of it..."

Okita stared at me, then burst out laughing. "C-Chizuru-chan! Where did that sour puss attitude come from?"

I sighed. _Okay, ya. I'm really pissed that I_ _had to come along._

Saito walked over to the rock and gave it a small push. The rock moved all the way across, revealing a set of staircases.

My eyes went wide. "A-a secret entrance!"

Nagakura grinned. "Surprised ya, eh?"

I walked over to the set of stairs, my gaze wandered down into the lit hallway. "So, it's down there?"

Everyone let their robes drop to the ground. I screamed and shot my hands over my eyes.

"Calm down Chizuru. We still have another towel on our... Ya." Heisuke laughed.

I dared a peek through my fingers and sure enough, they were wearing a towel over their... Ya.

Harada leaned towards me. "Oh? Whatcha lookin at, Chizuru?"

I jumped back. "W-what?!"

He grinned and pushed me to the stairs. "Come on. Let's get going." I struggled but it was no use.

"H-Harada-san?!" Everyone else followed us down the set of stairs.

The walls were unscripted with a beautiful Greek pattern that followed us along the walls. The steps had Sakura petals scattered all around.

To me, these looked like the staircases that lead to a beautiful dream.

The thought of it made me smile.

We reached the bottom of the steps and in front of us was a hot spring that could fit at least 15 elephants! I clapped my hands over my cheeks. "Uwah! This is beautiful!"

A stoned lion head was hanging from the end of the spring, spraying hot water from its mouth. Steam surrounded the entire room, its vapor bouncing off my skin.

"Chizuru. You might want to close your eyes."

I looked at Saito. "Huh?"

At that moment, Nagakura, Heisuke, and Harada took off their towel and jumped in.

"Hey! Be careful around here!" Hijikata shouted.

My face went into a deep red.

Oh well, now I can blame the heat to my sudden redness.

My eyes wandered to the tiny pool at the end of the big one. "I'll just be over here. Don't you dare come in!" I walked over there and looked back.

Everyone was already in the hot spring.

Convinced that no one is looking, I let my towel drop and quickly jumped in.

The heat burned my skin and I felt all tingley. It relaxed my aching muscles and I slid further down the pool.

"Ahh."

I heard splashing and yelling from Hijikata over at the other spring and I giggled. Even at a hot spring, Hijikata-san can still act like a demon.

I looked back and saw Heisuke running towards me. "Chizuru!"

I quickly covered my eyes. "H-Heisuke-kun?!"

I heard a splash and I looked behind me. Heisuke was in the pool smiling.

"Heisuke! What are you doing here?!" I squealed. He placed his hands behind his head.

"Wow! This pool is _way_ hotter than the big one!" I crossed my arms over my chest.

"Is that so?"

He looked over at me. "Hey, don't get mad. I promise not to... You know... Stare at you."

"F-fine! But just this once." I huffed.

He grinned and moved closer. "Chizuru!"

I quickly held out my hand. "But this is my personal space."

He inched back. "Sorry."

I looked over at him scratching his head. I haven't really noticed before, but Heisuke's body is really well-built. I blushed and looked away. Then I noticed Okita walking over here. I shut my eyes once again.

"O-Okita-san?"

I felt hands wrap around mine and pried them off my eyes. Okita was laying on his stomach in front of me, a playful smile was on his lips.

"Are you shy, Chizuru-chan?"

I pursed my lips together. "I wouldn't call it shy..."

He moved his head closer to my face. "Hey, what do you think of my body?"

My eyes widened and I looked down at the water. "W-why do you ask?"

Okita opened his mouth to say something but was cut off.

"Souji, are you harassing Chizuru again?"

I looked up and saw Hijikata-san (thankfully wearing a towel around his... Ya).

"Oh no, Hijikata-san. I was just asking Chizuru-chan of her utmost opinion."

I scoffed, "Ya right."

Okita got up and walked away, laughing.

Hijikata sighed. "I just don't like that guy sometimes."

Really? I think that Okita-san is really nice to me...

I sighed and looked over at Heisuke and found him asleep with his head on top of a rock.

I giggled and grabbed the towel next to me. Hijikata looked at me.

"You're getting out?"

I nodded. "My fingers are getting pruney and I figure I could use a little fresh air."

Hijikata shrugged. "Suit yourself." He walked away.

I stood up and wrapped the towel around me, then I walked up the staircases.

The night wind blew at my skin with gentleness, the lake waves were flowing in a rhythmic way.

I looked up at the sky, millions of stars covering it.

I guess this trip wasn't so bad after all. My eyes softened and I brushed a piece of hair away from my face.

Then I began to feel hot, very hot. My throat dried up and the burn began to spread throughout my chest. I coughed heavily while clutching my throat.

N-now what...

I collapsed and a headache started to grow.

I kept on coughing like a sick man, my back arched towards the sky.

_Thirsty. I was oh so very _thirsty!_

My back fell to the ground and I started to feel the oxygen getting cut off.

Th-this is bad!

I went on my hands and knees and started to crawl towards the entrance to the hot springs. I gave a shuddering cough, and a dark sticky liquid spewed out.

Blood.

My eyes widened and my mouth hung open, blood dripping from my lips.

The breeze blew faster until it lifted the leaves from the ground and hurled it towards me.

Dry leaves scratched my arms and I cried out in pain. My arms were like jelly now and couldn't hold me up anymore.

I heard footsteps coming from below me and I glanced down the staircases, everyone was running towards me, frantically calling my name.

I lifted my head and an evil smile appeared on my lips. Hijikata stopped a few steps below me.

"Chizuru?"

I glared at him.

"I-I want blood! Blood _**now**_!"

My arms gave way and everything went black.

* * *

><p>OMG A CLIFFHANGER! NOOO! ToT! BUT HAVE NO FEAR! I'M HALF WAY DONE WITH THE NEXT CHAPTER! I'LL TRY TO UPLOAD IT AS FAST AS I CAN! UNTIL THEN, REVIEW!

Next Chapter: Having a Nightmare with the Wolves

13. Having a Nightmare with the Wolves

Having a Nightmare with the Wolves

~~~

>I couldn't remember anything that had happened after I left the hot spring. I only knew that I screamed for blood all night. The blood lust in me was getting worse. No one wanted to do it, but they kept me tied up to a rock in the dens because I kept on trying to escape. I still don't know how this all started...<p>

I slowly opened my eyes, a ray of sunlight let itself in. I squinted and blinked a couple of times.

The silhouette of a wolf was sitted a few feet away from me. I leaned in closer.

"Saito-san?"

His navy blue fur shined as the sun passed over it. He turned his head. "You're awake."

I coughed. "W-what happened to me?"

Saito got up and trotted over, his claws making a clicking noise as he walked. He stopped in front of me. "We don't know what happened last night. You just kept screaming for blood..."

I looked away from his gaze. "Is that so..."

My eyes widened and I felt the headache coming back.

Saito jumped to his feet. "What's wrong?"

I pressed against the rock, my hands starting to get sweaty.

"Don't worry about me."

Saito took a step closer. "Yukimura..."

I started to twitch and gasp for breath.

\_Oh no... Not again!\_ I screamed as the fire burned in my chest again. The reason in my brain started to ebb away until I can only think of one thing: blood.

Saito shifted into his human form and grabbed both of my shoulders.

"Chizuru?! What's wrong?!"

I looked at him with disgust. "Let go of me!"

I flexed my arms and the ropes holding me snapped. I pushed him away and he stumbled backwards.

I looked around crazily.

"I must find him, my master!"

I took an insanely long leap and landed at the entrance.

It was then I felt something push me from behind and I landed on the floor. I glanced up and saw Saito leaning over me, a mask of concern on his face.

"Stop it! This isn't like you at all!" Then he gasped. "Y-you're eyes... They are red."

I stopped struggling and the pain suddenly subsided. "What?"

"Wait. They turned back to brown." Saito leaned in closer. "What happened to you, Chizuru."

I moved my head.

"... That's the first time you said my name."

His eyes widened and he smiled. "So it was."

I relaxed a little.

"Saito-san..."

He suddenly got up.

"Sorry for pushing you like that. I don't know what else I could do."

I sat up and rubbed my head. "Hey, but at least the headache is gone now."

I glanced at him. "The strange thing is, that all this craziness started when I met Kazama."

He sighed. "I've noticed that. Do you remember what happened on that day?"

I looked thoughtful for a moment.

"Umm. There was that time when I felt a strange feeling inside of me when I looked at his eyes..."

I frowned. "But that's all I can remember him doing."

\_Besides the kissing part, uhg.\_

He tapped his chin. "This may as well be some phenomenal event... Or it could be somehow connected to Mibu Forest."

"Oh? Why is that Saito-san?"

\_I still didn't understand how me acting like a total idiot after meeting a freak stranger can have anything to do with the Wolves of Mibu.\_

Saito sighed. "I don't know. But he is the only other human we have seen enter this forest. So it is possible to assume such a thing."

I was mindblown on how smart Saito-san was.

"Wow Saito-san! You really have a good brain for these sort of situations!"

He blushed slightly. "I wouldn't call it a huge success. Just a mere guess."

I stood up to face him. "You're being too honest."

\_But that's what makes Saito-san, Saito-san.\_

"Please don't tell the other guys about this." I begged. I don't want them to have another problem to worry about.

He stared at me for a bit. "... I'll try to refrain from mentioning it. But if the circumstance changes..." Saito glanced at the entrance of the den, a faraway look in his eyes.

I slid in next to him.

"Yeah. I guess you could spill everything if that happens."

A breeze blew in, blowing Saito's hair gently. I never thought that I would be affected by a curse like the wolves were.

But if I wanted to save them, I would have to somehow break my curse in the process and that would mean finding the one person who might have caused all this: Kazama.

\* \* \*

><p>I stayed inside the whole day, Hijikata cared too much of my safety to be letting me off.</p>

I didn't know what else to do so I spent the day exploring the cave. It turns out that it didn't go that deep so my exploration ended too soon.

I poked my head out and looked up.

The night sky glittered like thousands of candles lit up. The moon was casting night shadows onto trees.

All of the wolves were out on a midnight patrol to investigate a disturbance at the lake. That left me alone with Okita, who volunteered to watch over me.

"Trying to escape me, huh?"

I looked over my shoulder to see Okita leaning against a rock with his hands behind his head. I sat back on my knees.

"No. I just wanted to get some fresh air."

\_Being stuck at in this cave can be suffocating at some times.\_

He closed his eyes. "I remember when I was always stuck at home."

I cocked my head to one side. "What do you mean?"

Okita-san was always an outgoing person, I could never imagine him as someone who would stay at home all day.

"I had Tuberculosis. So you can imagine how terrified I was when the doctor told me that I only had a few years left to live."

I gasped.

Okita-san had Tuberculosis?!

I scooted next to him.

"W-were you alright?"

He chuckled. "Don't worry. When I got affected by this curse, the disease went away completely."

I clenched my fists together. Still, he got rid of his sickness, but is now cursed by another. I don't know if I should feel happy or sympathetic.

"I had no idea. Okita-san, you've been through a lot, huh?"

Okita shrugged.

"Who knows."

He opened his eyes again and met mine. "A disease or a curse doesn't mean shit to me if I can't protect the person I care about."

My eyes widened.

Did he mean me?! My cheeks began to blush red.

He gave me his wolfish grin. "Heh, are you blushing Chi-Chi?"

I shot my head to look at him despite my red color.

"I-I am not!"

He laughed and then stared at me. "Ch-Chizuru... You're eyes... Are turning red!"

I blinked a couple of times and then the pain started.

I fell to the ground and held my head. I pulled at my hair to try to convert my mind off of blood.

Okita knelt next to me and placed his hands on my shoulders. He shook me gently.

"What's wrong, Chizuru?!"

I looked up at his worried face, my eyes straining to focus. I reflexively smacked his hands away, and sat up.

My mind was gone. I glared at him.

"Don't touch me."

A face of shock covered his face and he glared back. "Chizuru, this isn't like you at all!"

I stood up and placed my hands on my hips. "Huh. It seems like I got this power under control now."

I started to walk towards the entrance and away from this awful place, but then I felt a hand wrap around my ankle.

Okita stared at me, a frown on his lips. "If you leave, I'll kill you."

I laughed half-heartedly. This man can kill me?

"Oh? You sure you want to make threats like that?"

He stood up and looked down on me.

"I don't have too. I know the real you is stronger than the person standing before me now."

I slapped him across the cheek. "Shut the hell up, dog! You don't know anything about the new me! I'm stronger than before now!"

He frowned. "Then why are you crying?"

My eyes widened and I felt the tears glistening down my cheek.

Huh? That's strange.

Okita suddenly put his arms around me.

"The person who changed you can't be trusted. Let it go already."

I felt my eyes turn back to its brown color and I buried my face on his shirt.

"Okita-san! I'm sorry!"

He smiled. "Don't worry. I'll keep you from going into the dark side."

I pulled away from him.

I didn't know what else to say.

"... The nightmares keep on worsening though. Ever since I met Kazama." I sniffed.

Okita pulled me on his mat and I layed next to him. My heart beated double time. What was he doing?!

"How about I make the nightmares go away?" That sentence made its way into my heart.

I smiled at him, a single tear drop fell from my eyes. "Thank you, Okita-san."

I closed my eyes and heard his breathing next to my ear.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Next Chapter: Summoning the Demon with the Wolves<strong>

\*\*Le gasp! What Demon?! :O\*\*

#### 14. Summoning of the Demon with the Wolves

\*\*Summoning of the Demon with the Wolves\*\*

~~~

>It was soon the next day. I had no nightmares of Kazama last night, and I am grateful for that. Okita said nothing of my behavior before and acted like it never happened.<p>

But I can't get it out of my head. Who was that "person" who was controlling me? Another presence? My other half?

Ahh, I just don't know anymore! I frowned, another thought struck me.

Why does Kazama want me anyways? I shook my head. Come on Chizuru! Do we really want to know what he wants?! I was too lost in my thoughts that I bumped into Hijikata-san.

"Oof!" I rubbed my nose, "S-sorry, Hijikata-san!" I heard him sigh, "Can you be anymore clumsy?"

"H-how mean!" I pouted. Sure I can be clumsy but he didn't have to put it in a way that seemed like I was always that way 24/7.

"Hey Hijikata-san, where are you off to this early in the morning?" I was curious.

"Just going on my daily walk." I tilted my head to the side, "You go on walks everyday?"

I suddenly had an image of Hijikata-san as an old man doing his walks. I stifled back my laughter.

He glance over at me. "Something funny?"

I waved my hand, still giggling. "Ah no. It's just that it makes you seem like an old man."

He narrowed his eyes, obviously annoyed by my attempt at a joke. "Exercising everyday gives you better stamina. Not only for a wolf body, but also a human body."

"Gosh. You almost sound like Saito-san, Hijikata-san!"

He gave a dry cough. "Is that supposed to be a compliment?"

"Ah! Um. Just forgot about it." I slumped my shoulders.

No more smart comebacks for me. But I feel like accompanying

Hijikata-san on his walk. I have this strange sensation that something out worldly will happen today. I shook my head. _Where did that thought come from?_

"Hijikata-san? Um, can I come with you on your walk?"

He scratched his head. "I don't see why not. You're done with all your chores right?"

I nodded my head. Hijikata shrugged. "Let's go then."

My face lit up.

"Thank you!"

* * *

><p>I was desperately trying to keep up with Hijikata-san. This doesn't seem like a walk at all!

It was more like a jog, and I couldn't keep up with his long strides!

"Hijikata-san! Please wait for me!"

I was already sweating and it seems like we jogged around the entire forest! He looked over his shoulder. "Hey, you're the one who wanted to come along!" he shouted.

I narrowed my eyes. "Well, you said 'walk' so I thought we would be taking our time! Not run around in circles!"

My legs were begging me to rest, but I didn't want to stop. I felt my heart beat faster and suddenly I felt as if I could overcome anything. I tilted my head upwards towards the trees.

I stopped for a mere millisecond and sprung up to a high branch. I grabbed the branch and started swinging from tree to tree.

This strength is amazing! I wonder where it came from! I heard Hijikata-san shout from below.

"Chizuru! What the hell are you doing?! Get down from there!"

I looked down and realized how high I was, about 25 ft above the ground.

I felt my eye twitch and the color return. My eyes widened. "What, what?! Hijikata-san! Save me!" The fear of heights hit me hard. I don't want to die!

I felt my hand slip from the branch and I dropped.

Wind blew at my face as I plunged to my death. I screamed.

I expected to land on the cold, hard ground, but I felt something soft catch me. I opened my eyes and stared into the eyes of Hijikata-san. His hands were on my back and under my knees.

Basically, he was holding me like a princess.

I gasped. "H-Hijikata-san! I-I'm sorry!" I blushed.

He stared at me with a mixture of worry and anger. "What the hell were you doing up there?! Or how did you get up there in the first place?!"

Actually I don't know myself.

"I don't know! I just jumped. That's all."

He closed his eyes. "'That's all' she says..."

I tilted my head to the side. "Huh? Hijikata-san?" I saw his eyelids slowly open, revealing his violet eyes.

"You worry me too much. Just be more careful."

Did he... Did he really care for me? I looked down at my hands, not sure on what to say next.

"W-well! Let's get back to our walk!"

He looked surprised for once. "Are you okay though? I don't want you to hurt yourself."

I looked at him. "I'm fine! Truly!" I leapt from his arms and spun around once, demonstrating my well-being.

Hijikata sighed and smiled. "Well since you're all better, let's continue."

I held up my finger. "Walk slower this time 'kay?" He waved and began walking.

"Suit yourself."

My arm fell to the side. "Ahh, wait, Hijikata-san!"

* * *

><p>We walked through the entire forest and made a rest stop at the lake. I sat atop the big rock with my legs spread out. The wind ruffled my hair gently.</p>

Hijikata stood a few paces ahead of me, close to the lake.

"This feels nice, Hijikata-san."

A day like this is perfect for relaxing. "Ya. It does feel nice."

I brought my right hand up to the sky. _I wonder what the clouds feel like? Is it soft like a futon? Or maybe like silk....

My heart skipped a beat. My eyes widened as I felt a familiar presence approach us. I quickly turned around and saw Kazama hiding in the shadow of a tree.

Hijikata noticed him too and went into wolf mode. I leapt from the

rock and moved in next to Hijikata.

Kazama stepped out, brushing his hair during the process. I shivered, suddenly remembering the last encounter I had with him.

"You look like you're doing well, my princess."

I tried my best to not look afraid. "K-Kazama! Who are you and what did you do to me?!" I balled up my fist, I need to know what happened to me! Why I crave for blood. Why I suddenly have super strength and agility. Worst of all, why the hell I have red eyes when it activates!

I heard a chuckle from him as he came closer.

Hijikata growled beside me. "Dont you dare come any closer!"

Kazama stopped and with an amused expression he said. "Oh? The so-called 'demon' commander wishes to order a real demon to stop?"

My eyes widened. A real demon? Hijikata arched his back lower to the ground. "_Real demon_, huh? Why would you call yourself a _real demon_?"

Kazama narrowed his eyes. "Fool. I have no intention of telling a no good dog like you anything about me."

I began to shake visibly. _Huh? Why am I suddenly scared of him?_

Kazama noticed me shaking and smiled softly. "I believe you, my dear, know who I am. After all, it was your father who set this all up."

"W-what do you mean? Father is away in the States!"

I saw him shake his head, "Huh, he never told you? That you were the 'cursed child' he found on his doorstep?" My eyes widened. _Cursed child?_

"My father never told me anything like that! He just told me that I was abandoned by my real parents!" I tried to hold back the tears that were forming from the corner of my eyes. I never told anyone this because I don't want their pity. It sickens me when I see them feeling sorry for me.

Hijikata was obviously in shock, hearing that I was once an orphan. I saw him shake slightly, either by fear of Kazama or anger of hearing my past.

"That old man can't be trusted, huh." Kazama slid his gaze to mine. Even though we were feets away, I can feel his power overcoming mine. I quickly looked away. I heard Kazama chuckle.

"How about I tell you everything? The whole truth." My breath locked in my throat. If he did confess all his secrets, should I believe him?

"I-I have to hear it first!"

I felt Hijikata stiffen beside me. I could tell that he wouldn't listen to anything Kazama had to say. "Hijikata-san. Let's hear him out first." I heard a growl of disapproval and he relaxed his shoulders.

"Oh? The mighty dog got told by a little girl?"

I glared back at Kazama. "Stop it! Just say it already!"

"You don't waste anytime, do you?" Kazama sneered, "Your 'real parents' are actually deities from the Kindom of Mibu. They are the original demons who made our population grow in tremendous numbers. The reason they gave you away is so you can learn about the human ways... And their weakness. Someday you will lead the demons into the human world and take over the earth. That is your destiny."

... I'm a real demon? My strength left me and I fell to my knees, hands clutching either sides of my head. I couldn't take all this information at once.

"It's a lie... You're lying to me..."

Hijikata moved in and placed a paw on my leg, hoping to comfort me. Kazama took a few steps forward.

"You can believe me or not, it doesn't change that you are my future bride and I will come back for you." I looked up at Kazama, "Y-you said that you are also a demon."

"That's right. I was one of the first demons to have pure blood from the originals." I balled my fists up, "You know that I won't believe any of this shit you give me. So just get the hell out of here."

Kazama sighed and eyed Hijikata.

"I placed the curse on you and your men. We plan on using you for the future war as sacrifices to resurrect the old creatures of Hell." I saw Hijikata hunched back into his battle stance.

"What do you mean by sacrifices?"

"We need eight, half human beasts to bring back His Majesties comrades. That's where you eight come in." My eyes widened. _What? He was planning on killing Hijikata-san and the others?!_

"Oh and by the way," Kazama smiled "We already have one of your men."

Did he mean Sannan-san?! Hijikata barred his fangs. "You bastard! Where did you take him?!"

"That is none of your concern as you will be joining him soon enough." A strong gust of wind came and Kazama was not there anymore.

Your blood lust will become worse if you don't take any blood. Which reminds me, I might reconsider reversing the curse on those filthy dogs if you willingly come to me. Think about it.

My head shot up as Kazama's voice left my head. I can save them if I let myself be Kazama's bride...

Hijikata shifted in his human form and knelt beside me. "Hey, are you okay?"

No I wasn't. All this information just came rushing in and I don't know if I can handle it. "I'm fine." My voice came out as a whisper.

"Don't let him get to you. As long as we're here, I won't let anyone touch you."

Tears appeared on the corner of my eyes and streamed down my face. I couldn't keep the wave of emotions from water falling in. I threw myself on Hijikata and held him tight. "I don't want to accept any of this stuff! I don't want him to hurt you guys!"

More tears came and went, a never-ending cycle. I felt strong arms wrap itself around my shaking body.

"You don't have to accept it. I'll be here for you, always." I looked up at his warm violet eyes, a thought coming to my mind._ Should I give my self in to Kazama?_ It's the only way to save them all.

"Hijikata-san..."

I shut my mouth.

No, I will tell them everything tomorrow. "Hold me tighter. I don't want to lose you. Or any of you!" For now, I just need comfort from this madness.

Hijikata agreed and we stayed in this position until the rest of wolves came to look for us.

* * *

><p>This... took me FOREVER to write! *o* But hoped you guys enjoyed it~ ;) Don't forget to REVIEW!

Next Chapter: Making Promises with the Wolves

15. Side Story : Heisuke's Lunch

Side Story : Heisuke's Lunch

Heisuke: Alright! Its time for lunch!

Chizuru: Remember not to eat too fast this time!

Heisuke: Eh? Why not? Eating fast makes me feel better!

Chizuru: But last time, an emergency showed up and you choked on the food! We ended up having _you_ as the emergency!

Heisuke: You don't have to remind me. I remember Shinpachi sitting on

my back trying to get the food out.

Chizuru: ... That didn't end up so well.

Heisuke: No kidding.

Chizuru: Oh! How about I spoon feed you?

Heisuke: What?! S-spoon feed...

Chizuru: It wouldn't hurt! Come on, say '_Ahh'~_

Heisuke: F-fine. But I'm doing this for only you, Chizuru!

Chizuru: Heisuke-kun...?

Heisuke: ... That was tasty! Thanks Chizuru!

Chizuru: Y-your welcome.

Heisuke: You should spoon feed me everyday! Just like a good wife would!

Chizuru: H-Heisuke-kun?! W-w-wife?!

Heisuke: I-I mean you'll make a good wife someday!

Chizuru: Ahh. I'm glad you think so, Heisuke-kun!

16. Making Promises with the Wolves

Making Promises with the Wolves

~~~

>"Hey Chizuru, are you alright?" I glanced up at Heisuke, who asked that question.<p>

It was already the next day and I still haven't got over what Kazama had told me about my past. Actually, that was the only thing that I thought about.

"Ya. I'm okay."

I sighed and stared at my breakfast, which consists of a bowl of rice and bird meat.

Everyone else was on a mission to try to find out where Kazama was coming from, leaving Heisuke-kun and Harada-san at home with me.

"You should really eat something. If you don't, you might pass out."

Harada was sitting across from me, tearing away at the rabbit meat with his paws.

I shook my head. "I'm not that hungry."

I felt Heisuke's hand place itself on my shoulder.

"Hey, don't worry about what Kazama said. I'll still protect you even if you are a demon."

"But what if my powers go crazy again?" I haven't had that happen in a few days.

"I might end up hurting you guys!"

Harada looked up from his meal. "I know you wouldn't do that. You aren't that kind of person who would kill."

Having heard him say that makes me even more scared if I actually do kill.

"Thanks for trying to cheer me up." I bowed my head.

"It's really not a big deal!" Heisuke was waving his hands in an attempt to by-pass the situation.

"But Sano-san is right for that matter." Heisuke looked at me with compassion in his eyes,

"You wouldn't put others in danger, even if you were possessed by some crazy curse."

Tears suddenly sprung from my eyes. I tried to wipe them away but another hand was already at it.

Heisuke's hand brushed against my skin gently. His touch was soft and comforting.

"I-I'm sorry for suddenly tearing up like that!" I hiccupped.

Heisuke smiled. "It's not your fault. Don't be like that."

I slowly raise my head to meet his gaze, it was warm, just like the morning sun.

"Okay. I won't feel sorry for myself anymore."

My hand slid across my cheek as his went to his sides.

"But you guys have to promise me this," I wouldn't want them to still be in danger because of me, "If I ever do lose control, don't try to save me if it's already too late. You guys are like family to me, ever since I met you in this very forest. So losing you is the worse punishment I could ever have."

Harada slid next to me on my other side and licked my hand. "If that's what we gotta do to make you happy..."

I nodded. Heisuke frowned and looked away. "...But... Chizuru..."

He made a fist with his hand and placed it over his heart. "Fine. If it ever comes to this -which I know will definitely not- I will hold on to your promise."

Relief washed over me. "Thank you, Heisuke-kun, Harada-san."

I stood up and smoothed out my shirt. "Now, let me clean up the mess you guys made."

I began to lean down to pick up the leftover bones when Harada stepped in front of me. "Let us do the cleaning for once. You've had enough trouble already."

Heisuke nodded enthusiastically. "Ya! Just go take a nap, Chizuru!"

I watched, wide-eyed at them as they clumsily tripped over the bones and place mats. I couldn't help but giggle.

Harada and Heisuke looked at each other and then grinned. "Hey, let's all go relax by the Sakura tree later. Its nice out today and the other guys are on the Kazama hunt so it would only be the three of us!" Harada wagged his tail enthusiastically.

I clapped my hands together. "That sounds like a great idea! Right, Heisuke-kun?"

"Uh huh! I could use a break after all this crazy junk that's been happening." He looked at me and held out his hand.

"But if you insisted, Chizuru, we could ditch Sano-san here and go off on our own." My eyes widened and I felt the heat rise up in my face.

"Ehh?! Heisuke-kun?!" Harada shifted back into his human form and began rubbing his fist onto Heisuke's head. "Oh? Trying to act like a man for once?" Heisuke growled. "Quit teasing me."

I couldn't help but laugh. Harada looked at me and then suddenly grabbed both of my hands. "Hey, don't listen to that kid over there. You would rather go with me right?" His face leaned closer until our noses almost touched.

"H-Harada-san?!" I stared at his golden eyes and felt my heart skip beats.

"Hey! Sano-san! Cut that out!" Heisuke grabbed onto Harada's shoulders and pulled him off me. I gasped as they landed on top of each other. "Ow! What the hell Heisuke?"

"Ah! Get off of me! You're heavy!" He pushed Harada off and stood up. "Are you guys okay?" I walked up to them. Harada looked away from my gaze.

"Sorry. I shouldn't have done that to you." My eyes widened and I shook my head. "I-It's nothing! Don't worry about it!" He smiled. "So you would rather let me kiss you?" I blushed. "Th-that's not it!"

Heisuke moved in front of me. "I'll protect you from Sano-san, Chizuru!"

"Tch. You really think you can beat me, little man?" I saw Harada-san get up. "Stop it you guys!" I yelled, horrified that they were going to brawl in front of me.

Then I heard both of them snicker. "Eh?" They both burst out in laughter. "Chizuru! The look on your face!" Heisuke turned to look at me.

"I have an idea! Let's all go to the Sakura tree first, and clean this up later!" I crossed my arms in an annoyed manner. "Okay first you decide that the joke you did," I looked from Heisuke to Harada, "was funny enough to pull on me, and second, now you don't want to clean up this mess?" I sighed. Men. They will always try to find an excuse on almost anything!

Harada walked up to me and placed his hand on my head. "Come on, Chizuru! We'll promise to clean this up later." I tilted my head to look at him. "That's two promises you are making to me." Heisuke moved his hands behind his head. "Ya. But you know you can trust us with it."

I frowned. Maybe I am just over reacting to these things. Which reminds me, I haven't told them about what Kazama said to me yet! I forced a smile on my face. "You're right. Let's take a break first and clean this up later." I'll just tell them when we get to the Sakura tree. They both looked at each other, obviously confused as to why I agreed easily to that request. But that soon changed to a warm smile. "Alright! Let's go!"

Heisuke ran out of the dens, leaving me with Harada. He dropped his hands to his side and glanced at me. "If you're tired, you can sit on my shoulders."

"Harada-san you really know how to talk to women huh?" Because every time he even looks at me, my face brightens up! I heard a chuckle escape from his lips.

"I've picked up a few tips from here and there. But the offer is still up." My eyes wandered to the ground. "I can walk still." Well I have been at home for all this time.

"I'll respect your wishes." He slid his right hand into mine. "But can we still hold hands?" I smiled at him. "Ya. I would like that." Harada was always there for me, so I have to at least make him happy.

\* \* \*

><p>I spotted Heisuke waving to us at the top of the tree. "Hey! You guys sure take your time!"</p>

I waved back to him and realized that I was still holding Harada's hand. I slowly slid them out. He got the message and let go.

Sakura petals were scattered around the base of the tree, making it look like something out of a fairy tale. I ran up to Heisuke. "Uwah! The tree looks even more beautiful than before!" He grinned. "I know right? That's probably why Sano-san wanted to come today." Harada walked up to me.

"Uh huh. This scene is pretty rare. The petals only lie flat on the ground once a year, at this time." He squatted down and picked up a petal. "But this also foretells if we'll have a good year or

not."

"Eh? What do you mean?"

Heisuke pointed to the tree. "Look. If the petals are scattered more to the front, it tells us that this year will be a lucky one." I cocked my head to the side.

"How would you know that the side we are standing on is the front?" Harada stood up again. "Well our dens face this side of the tree. So we call it the front." I nodded my head slowly.

"Ohh. Um. What if the petals are on the other side?" Heisuke crossed his arms. "It would mean that something terrible is about to happen." My eyes widened.

"No way!"

I walked over to the right side of the tree and compared both sides. Huh. It looks even to me... As if right on cue, a strong gust of wind came and blew a few of the petals from the front to the back. I gasped. Suddenly Harada and Heisuke shifted into their wolf form and looked behind me. I turned around and saw a shape running towards us.

A wolf shape.

I scrutinized at it and it turned out to be Saito-san. He halted to a stop in front of me and transformed into his human form, collapsing onto the ground.

"Saito-san?!"

I fell to my knees. "What's happened?!" He panted and gasped for breath as his hands clutched his stomach. I noticed blood pouring out of his stomach.

"He... He was there... Kazama... He came out of no where and attacked us." Saito coughed heavily. "...and then he took Souji and Hijikata!" Harada and Heisuke ran up him.

"They were kidnapped?! Where is Shinpachi and Kondou-san?!" Harada growled.

"Th-they are searching the perimeter for them and sent me back to warn you guys..." He suddenly went unconscious.

"Damn it!" Heisuke swore under his breath.

"Right. Heisuke, you and Chizuru bring Saito back to the dens. I'll go catch up with Shinpachi and Kondou-san."

On that note Harada ran down the hill. Heisuke shifted into human form and wrapped Saito's arm around his neck. I did the same with his other arm.

"Hijikata-san... Okita-san... Please be alright!"

Did this all happen because of me? Because I was different from everyone else? Tears sting my eyes as I carried Saito-san down the

slope. A breeze blew past me and I heard what seemed like a whisper.

\_You caused this on yourself by not agreeing to go with me, and now your friends are going to pay the price. Unless you want to compromise on that?\_

I began sobbing uncontrollably.

This all happened because of... \_Me.\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>So I didn't have school today and decided to write the next chapter for this! ^3^ <strong>

\*\*Next Chapter: War Strategies with the Wolves\*\*

\*\*Reviews Please~ : )\*\*

## 17. War Strategies with the Wolves

\*\*War Strategies with the Wolves\*\*

~~~

>"... H-hey... Souji... You alright?"

_ "Ya. But this... Sucks..." _

Okita and Hijikata were bound tightly by rusty iron chains around a pillar with a Greek pattern circling it. They were both a few feet away from each other, scratches seen on their face and arms. The battle with Kazama had worn them out and it ended when Kazama threw a ball of fire -which seemed to come out of his palm- and it hit both Hijikata and Okita in the chest. It burned their whole body until they simply disappeared and ended up where they are now.

_ "I wanted to defeat Kazama with my own hands!" Okita whined.

-

_Hijikata gritted his teeth. "Where do you think we are anyways?"

-

_It didn't seem like there was anything in that room, if in fact it was a room they are in. The ground was filled with dry dirt and rocks, it was cold beneath them, like touching an iron bar that has been left in the snow. No walls were seen and that left the previous question hanging if this dark area was abandoned or not. _

_No escape route could be planned, even if they did get out.

-

_Hijikata and Okita had tried to transform into their wolf form so they could wiggle out of the chains. But for some reason it was blocked, so they were stuck in human form. _

_Hijikata twisted his hand upwards to try find a lock pad on his chains. _

_ "Hey Souji. Do see a lock on me?" Okita glanced over at the pillar next to him. _

_ "Umm. Sorry. It's too dark to see one." Hijikata sighed and his hand went limp._

_ "How much time has passed I wonder..." He closed his eyes and suddenly heard a voice. He swung his head around and saw a figure approaching them. Okita frowned and the figure that stopped right between them was...._

* * *

><p>I jolted awake from my nightmare, hair sticking to my forehead. I panted and pushed my bangs away. That was... Hijikata-san and Okita-san... But where were they? Was this nightmare also a part of my powers?

Confused as ever, my head moved to the sleeping form of Saito, whose shirt was removed and his abdomen bound tightly with some white cloth. His chest rose and fell calmly. No sign of him waking up.... yet.

My hand went up to my head. A headache sprung up but it wasn't as bad as before. I don't know if that is good or not, but I'll probably find out soon. I got up and walked over to the bucket that was filled to the rim with water. I picked up the white towel and dipped it into the bucket, took it out and rinsed it.

I walked back to Saito and kneeled next to him. I placed the wet cloth gently on his forehead. His eyes twitched for a second and then slowly opened.

"Ah. I'm sorry did I wake you?"

He gave me a small smile. "It's fine. I can't be of any use lying around here, can I?" His eyes wandered to the roof of the cave. I frowned. I still haven't told anyone about Kazama's request yet. "Um. Saito-san?"

He blinked. "Yes?" I began to fidget.

"Uh... I-I had a dream about Hijikata-san and Okita-san." _I'll just tell him about Kazama later._ He glanced over at me, his eyes still clouded with sadness. "Really?" I nodded and squeezed my hands together.

"They were tied up somewhere, but they were alive." I heard Saito-san give a breath of relief.

"It appears that that dream of yours may be able to tell us where their location is." _Probably. But the thing is that I don't know how to control my powers yet. Or if that nightmare was actually true or not... Huh. But who was that person that appeared before them?_ It never crossed my mind until now. I felt Saito's hand on top of my own and I looked up.

"I know you're afraid of the power you were given. But it doesn't change that you control your own future."

"Saito-san..." _He really does care for me..._ My head shot up and I felt the headache worsen.

I got up and ran over to the bucket of water, to look at my reflection. My eyes turned from brown to red and I saw that person give a wicked smile.

"Ch-Chizuru?..." Saito croaked. I glanced over at him.

"What is it Saito-san? Are you thirsty? Cause I know I am!" I smelled the blood on him. That luxury just sitting there, waiting for me to come at it!

My feet carried me over to Saito until I was kneeling next to him.

He sat up and grimaced in pain. The wound was closed but the bandage had dry blood blotting every speck. My heart pumped faster at the sight of it and I grinned.

"Chizuru... This isn't like you! Please snap out of it!" Saito-san was unable to do anything at the moment and he swore under his breath.

I heard a click, clack noise coming towards the den and I swiveled my head to the entrance. A light brown wolf charged in, its rusty colored eyes alert. "Chizuru? What are you?"

The wolf's mouth snapped shut as I saw him make eye contact with me.

"Oh? Why if it isn't Heisuke-kun." I stood up, forgetting about the blood.

"You want in on this too?" He barred his fangs at me and crouched down.

"You're not Chizuru."

I frowned at him. "That brain of yours must have shrunk. Of course I'm Chizuru." I pushed a strand of hair behind my ear. "The real Chizuru."

I heard shuffling from behind. Saito stood up slowly, clutching his stomach. "What do you mean?"

"The Chizuru you all know and love was just a girl that got too accustomed to the human world." I sighed. _That girl was just too sweet. It sickened me whenever I saw someone trying to take advantage of her, but at that time, my powers were too weak to be called forth._

"So... Are you also our enemy?" My eyes flickered over to the small wolf.

"If you piss me off." I put on my sweet smile. Heisuke growled.

"Really now..."

I laughed half-heartedly. "Hardly. I just do whatever is right for me and only me."

My head snapped up and I blinked. "Eh? W-what happened?" The energy drained from me and I fell to my knees. Saito hobbled over and sat in front of me, holding my shoulders. "It looks like you're back." I lowered my head. "Where did I go?"

_ I knew the answer already. It just hurts to just say it out._ Heisuke trotted over and sat on the side of me. "Ch-Chizuru. It's nothing to be afraid of."

"Really? Was it my other self?" Saito let go of my shoulders and sat back.

"It was. But she didn't hurt us so don't worry." I bowed my head. "I'm sorry!"

Heisuke leaned his furry head closer. "What are you sorry for? It wasn't you you." I shut my eyes tightly.

"But that person has been causing nothing but trouble for all of you and I feel like I'm responsible for it!" Even though my other self was the one causing all of these terrible things to my friends, I just can't shake off the feeling that it was also me who is also taking part of all this.

"Can you just stop it!"

I looked up, half way of tearing up. Heisuke narrowed his eyes. "Why are you always trying to feel sorry for yourself?! Is it because you think that since you carry demon heritage, that you should burden yourself with all this trouble?" I could feel my hands shaking, from anger or fear I do not know.

"Th-that's not it!"

"Then why is it then?" Heisuke frowned.

"I just don't want to see people getting hurt!" My voice cracked when I said it and I knew that reason wouldn't work.

"How do you think we feel? Being stuck in this forest for eternity?" Saito had remained silent up until now. _I don't have a good comeback for that._

"..."

"You have to realize that not everything has to do with you, Chizuru."

My eyes widened, that remark has hit home. Up until now, I have always relied on the guys to help me get out of situations. I just stood there on the sidelines.

"I-I guess you're right. Being with all of you made me realize that even though you know that your future is clouded, that you should always strive for making it brighter."

Heisuke looked at Saito and they both smiled. "Uh huh. Now let's try

to come up with a plan to save Hijikata-san and Souji." Heisuke shifted in to his human form and stretched.

"Boy, staying in wolf form for a while can really take a toll on your back." Saito began to stand up.

"Ah. Saito-san you should really be getting some rest!" I quickly got up and directed him to his mat.

"I guess you're right." He layed on his back and closed his eyes. Heisuke and I tip-toed out of the dens.

"Hey! Heisuke! Chizuru!" Nagakura was waving at us with Kondou at his side. They walked up to us.

"Any sign of Hijikata-san or Souji?" Heisuke asked. Kondou shook his head. "We've looked everywhere and not a trace of them."

"Man, it's like they were completely wiped off the face of the planet." Nagakura scratched his head. I should probably tell them about the dream. "Um! I think I might know where they are."

I began to explain the foresight I had.

"Hmm. That place sure does sound familiar..." Kondou frowned. "Sorry, I just can't remember right now." Nagakura crossed his arms. "Take your time. I don't want this to be a blind search and rescue."

Kondou tapped his chin, showing a deep thinking process. His eyes lit up and he turned to me. "Yukimura. What did you say about those pillars?" I frowned.

"Um. What do you mean?"

"Well, was there anything special about those pillars?" Something special...

I closed my eyes and thought hard. I dug my way into my memory bank and looked. Pillar... Something on the pillar... A pattern! What kind, though... I blinked and stared at Kondou-san.

"A... Greek pattern." His eyes widened and he gasped.

"Greek pattern... The hot spring! They're there!" Heisuke scrunched up his face.

"Huh? But there were no pillars the last time we went."

"Man. You really don't pay attention do you?" Harada placed his hand on the side of the cave.

"What Kondou-san means is that there might be a hiden room in there." Of course! Well, it really wasn't something to be expected of. But if you were stuck in some magical forest, you wouldn't be surprised by this kind of stuff._

"So do we just waltz on in there?" I felt really naive just saying that. Nagakura grinned.

"I like your thinking Chizuru!"

Heisuke sighed. "You have brawns, Shinpachi-san, but not the brains."

"Why you little- ...Oh? So you're saying that I have a perfect body, huh?" Nagakura flexed his arms out. Pride twinkling in his eyes.

"Stop you guys! Chizuru is getting uncomfortable!" Kondou-san addressed to me. My face reddened. Kondou-san... Why did you have to get me involved?!_

Harada walked over to me. "Well, shall we get going?" I nodded my head.

"Yes."

Kondou raised his hand and everyone shifted into their wolf form. Now I felt awkward being the only human here.

"You're not leaving without me, right?" I turned around to see Saito -in wolf form- standing tall and healthy.

"Saito-san! Shouldn't you be resting?" I walked over to him.

"It's okay with this body. As long as I don't shift to my human form I should be alright." he shook out his fur.

"Okay. Let's go!" Kondou howled and the wolves and I set off towards the hot spring.

* * *

><p>I pushed with all my might and the big rock moved over. I looked down the set of stairs, no Sakura petals were seen scattered like the last time and that made me uncomfortable.</p>

"It's all clear."

I glanced back at the wolves and nodded. They followed my lead as I went down the flight of stairs.

The only sound that was being made was my footsteps and the wolves. You couldn't even hear any water gushing down. It was dark. No light shined at the bottom, the only source we had was the sun at the entrance.

I felt something furry brush my bare arms. "You okay up here?" Harada asked. I kept my head focused in front of me.

"I'm fine." If this scared me now, imagine when we get to the bottom and something was waiting for us there.

Harada walked next to me until we reached the bottom. Everyone then shifted into their human form, except for Saito whose injury could worsen if he did.

I could make out the two pools. But there was one thing missing: the water.

The pits were all dried up and at the centers were two large holes.

"It looks like someone pulled the plug." Heisuke looked down the crater.

"Be careful!" I called back.

Kondou looked at the large pool, and then the small one.

"Alright, here's the plan: me, Hajime, and Shinpachi will go look down the large pool. While Sanosuke, Heisuke, and Chizuru go down the smaller one." Harada crossed his arms.

"I don't know about this. It seems kind of risky." Nagakura playfully punched Harada's shoulder.

"Don't wimp out now Sano. You guys have to be man enough to protect Chizuru here!" Heisuke nodded enthusiastically.

"Uh huh! I won't let anyone touch you, Chizuru!" I smiled.

"Thank you."

With that said we parted ways. The hole looked bottomless which scared me.

I suddenly felt someone lift me up under my legs.

"Ehh?!" I looked unto the face of Harada.

"Ha, this way you won't land anywhere painful."

"Hey, Sano-san! Why do you get to carry her?!" Heisuke lifted up a fist.

"Well first off, you're annoying and second, you aren't tall enough to hold her!" Harada grinned. I blushed.

"Th-this isn't the time to be playing around!" Heisuke sighed. "Fine. Let's go!" He jumped into the hole. Harada looked at me.

"Alright. You better close your eyes." I did and felt his legs lift up and then drop. The wind hit my face as soon as he dropped. I held onto his neck tighter, scared that I might fall. It seemed like we'd be falling forever until I felt a thump and opened my eyes.

I took in the surrounding and saw pillars with Greek patterns around them, just like in my dream. Heisuke frowned.

"It doesn't seem like there are any walls in here." I let go of Harada's neck and stepped down.

"It was like that in my dream..." I swiveled my head to get a better feel for it.

"Weird. I sense a presence in here..." I muttered under my breath. We began walking between the pillars with no sense on where we are going.

"Hijikata-san! Okita-san! Are you here?" I yelled. My voice carried itself down the road. I heard a faint cough. We all looked at each other and ran towards the sound. _Oh, please let them be okay!_

"Damn. Where are they?!" Heisuke swore. Every pillar we passed seemed like the exact same one. Harada pointed at something up ahead.

"There!"

I saw the shadow of a figure hunched down against a pillar. As we ran, the shadow faded away, revealing Okita.

"Okita-san!" I ran over and wrapped my arms around him.

"Ch-...Chizuru?..." I leaned back and his head slowly raised.

"Okita-san! I'm glad you're alright!" He gave a weak cough. Heisuke and Harada stopped in front of us.

"Glad to see you in one piece, Souji." He smiled and nodded.

"Y-ya." Something shiny caught my eyes. A bunch of chains -similar to Okita's- were lying in front of a pillar next to us.

"Okita-san. Where's Hijikata-san?" Harada and Heisuke began to untie Okita, who is slightly wobbling.

"Sh-she took him..." The chains fell to the ground with a clink. I caught him before he fell.

"Who did? Who took Hijikata-san?" I was shaking in fear for Hijikata. _What if he was hurt?_

My breathing suddenly sped up. Something was coming. Something... Out worldly.

Harada and Heisuke quickly changed to wolf form and leaped in front of me and Okita. Footsteps made its way closer as my heart raced.

A figure appeared out of the shadows. He wore what seemed like one of those western military outfits. His hair was raven black and it was cut short. But the thing that made me recognize him was his eyes. They were blinking violet, and then red.

"Hijikata-san!" He stopped and looked at me. His eyes... They look lifeless.

"...Y-you..." He clutched his head and groaned.

"Oh. So you're this early huh?" I looked behind Hijikata and saw someone who I was not expecting.

Myself.

* * *

><p>Wow. That was a long one...

**Thanks to everyone who gave a review and that made me even more motivated to write this chapter! **

**Longest chapter so far! **

Next Chapter. An Identity Crisis with the Wolves

18. An Identity Crisis with the Wolves

An Identity Crisis with the Wolves

Why... Why did everything have to be this way?!

I stared at the person behind Hijikata. She looks exactly like me. But her hair was down and she wore western clothes similar to Hijikata's.

"Hello."

Her voice matched mine as well.

"Wh-who are you?" I couldn't control the shakiness of my voice. She smiled.

"Who am I? Why, you should know the answer to that, Chizuru."

But I didn't know. "..."

"I am the real you. The demon version you might say."

Thoughts were spinning around in my head. _My other half? A demon..._

"What do you mean by that?" I saw her give a small sigh.

"Still naive as ever. But I guess I could tell you." She took a step forward. "You were the Chizuru that was born from human kindness that surrounded you when you were casted away."

That statement brought me back to the time when Kazama told me about how my "real" parents gave me away to teach me about human ways.

"Of course, when you were born, I was left buried in your conscious. Watching you live your perfect human life." She suddenly raised a fist.

"I couldn't stand it! You should have never been born! My parents were foolish in sending me to that disgusting human world. They got nothing out of it! Only a fake daughter born out of kindness!" She looked away and grinned.

"But that just makes me even more excited. A rival. Enemy." She pointed to me. "I will make you even more miserable, Chizuru."

I frowned. "If you say that you were locked inside of me, how did you get out."

She looked surprised for a second. "Oh? You avoided the whole "I'll make your life miserable" speech, huh?"

I said nothing. She shrugged. "This place is where I was kept in while watching you."

She suddenly clung to Hijikata's arm. "Anyways, I bet you want to know what's up with the western outfits."

I lowered my head. "Maybe a little..."

She laughed. "Well, since I'm going to lead an army of demons to attack the human world, why not wear something in that century?" My head shot up.

"What?"

"Ah. That seemed to have caught your attention." she sneered.

I held onto Okita tighter. His head still resting on my shoulders. "But what's that got to do with Hijikata-san?" I stiffened as I saw her fingers trail down his arms.

"Ah. He seems like the perfect candidate to assist me in that. Having the nickname 'demon commander' and all that." Hijikata's face twisted in pain and his hand tighten.

"What did you do to him?" I couldn't bear watching him in pain like that. I heard a giggle escape her lips.

"I just transferred some of my demon blood into him. It's no big deal really."

Heisuke and Harada snarled in front of me and their fur began to bristle. She tilted her chin upwards and tighten her grip on Hijikata.

"I was going to turn your other friend into a demon as well. But it looks like that isn't gonna happen." I pulled Okita closer to my body. Having the need to protect him made me fearless.

"You aren't going to have him." She sighed and whispered something to Hijikata. His eyes widened and he suddenly pulled something out of his waistband: a katana.

"Hijikata-san...?" I saw him charge at Harada and Heisuke, his katana gleaming in the darkness. They growled and leaped at him, claws unsheathed. He batted them away with ease, but what surprised me was that he used the back of his sword and not the blade.

I heard a yelp and saw them slam onto a pillar.

"Harada-san! Heisuke-kun!" I sat there like an animal that was trapped with no where to run.

Okita cried out in pain and I realized that I was squeezing the life out of him. I was too terrified. I loosened my grip a little and my eyes made contact with Hijikata-san's.

It showed pain and madness in them. I wanted to save him but I didn't know how.

"Well, don't just stand there gawking!" My other half pointed to me with a wicked grin.

"She's just a sitting duck."

I sucked in a breath. Hijikata was trembling. He lifted up his katana over his head. I shut my eyes tightly, waiting for it to be all over. I heard a gasp that sounded like mine.

I blinked and saw Kazama standing in front of me with both of his hands clamped down on Hijikata's sword.

"Kazama-san?!"

I sat, shocked on what just happened.

"Well, well. Never thought I'd see the day when I was the one to save you." Hijikata growled and leaped back. My other half scowled.

"Kazama... Chikage..."

Kazama turned towards me and held out his palm. "You owe me."

My eyes widened as I saw a ball of fire erupt out of his hand. It circled me and Okita and then started to burn my legs. It began to disappear and my eyes shot over to Harada and Heisuke. "Save them too!"

I pointed to their limp forms. He sighed and shot a fireball at them. They began to disappear as well. As my body began to crumble, I took a last glance at Hijikata and saw a tear slid down his cheek.

* * *

><p>"Ow!"</p>

I landed on the ground, hard. I felt something heavy on me and looked up. Okita was right on top of me!

His wounds were healed and was peacefully resting. I squirmed under him.

"O-Okita-san... Wake up!" I pushed gently on his shoulders. His eyes fluttered open and stared at me. "Eh? Chizuru-chan?"

Both arms were on either side of my head and he pushed up. "You know, considering that I almost died, this angle isn't that bad."

I frowned. "Get off me."

He did and sat back, I did likewise.

I looked around my surroundings. It appears that Kazama sent us back to the lake. But where was Harada-san and Heisuke-kun?

"Okita-san, did you see Harada-san or Heisuke-kun anywhere?" He shook

his head.

"You know I just woke up with no recollection of what happened."

True. But then where are they?

Suddenly an image flashed in my mind: Hijikata was crying and clutching his head in pain. I gasped.

"We... We have to save Hijikata-san!" I began to get up but Okita grabbed my arm.

"Let go, Okita-san!" For once his eyes shone with seriousness.

"And how do you suppose we do that? We are separated from the others and no clue on what to do next." I relaxed and looked at him.

"Then what am I supposed to do?" He closed his eyes and released my arm.

"If I was stronger, I could've defeated Kazama and we wouldn't be in this mess."

My heart began to skip beats. I couldn't let him take all the blame. I leaned my face closer to his and he opened his eyes.

"Okita-san did his best to protect Hijikata-san. But what's done is done. You can't change something that was in the past."

I learned a lot from living with the guys. Now it's my turn to give something back. Okita's eyes shone with surprised and then he tilted his head up. I looked up and saw the moon glittering with the stars surrounding it. Dark clouds came in, threatening to block the moon and its brightness. But then I saw the moon shine a little bit brighter and the clouds moved away.

"You... Really understand me huh, Chizuru-chan?" I looked back down at him.

"Okita-san?" He laughed softly and turned to me.

"Thank you."

My eyes widened as his face leaned closer to mine. I felt his lips touch my cheek and he drew me in closer. He pulled back and laughed again.

"Sorry, was that a little too rash?" I realized that he just kissed my cheek and I flamed.

"W-w-what...?!" He winked.

"Keep this a secret from the others, 'kay?"

I quickly averted from his gaze, my cheeks still bright. "Of course." I couldn't keep the pounding in my chest to slow down. My hand moved over my heart and I felt it. Is it a good feeling? I don't know. I took a peek at him.

"Okita-san..." He didn't look back. "Hmm?"

I dropped my hand back down. "We should probably be looking for the others." He closed his eyes.

"Guess you're right." I stood up and extended a hand to him.

"Here." He took it and I hauled him up.

"Hey! You guys!"

We both turned to the sound and saw everyone -in their human form- running towards us.

"Are you alright?" Heisuke asked me.

"I should be asking you that!" He was the one who got hurt, not me.

He grinned. "Hey remember, we heal on our own so don't worry!"

Kondou walked up to Okita. "Good to see you back." Okita smiled at him. "Ya."

My gaze wandered to Saito and I noticed that he didn't have any of his wounds, probably because of his healing ability. I sighed in relief.

"Oh? You don't seem too worried about me."

I blinked and saw Harada-san lean in closer. "Th-That's not true!" I stammered "I was worried about you to!"

He smiled mischievously. "I'm just kidding." I rolled my eyes.

"Hey now, don't you roll your eyes at me!" I saw him go behind me and felt two hands cover my eyes.

"H-Harada-san?! Wh-what are you doing?" I felt his breath next to my earlobe. "This way, you won't mock me with your cute eyes." he chuckled.

His touch was warm against my cold skin and I shivered.

"Sano-san. I think you better let go."

I heard Okita's voice in front of me. Harada's hand stiffened.

"...What's the matter with you?" I felt his hands release my eyes.

Okita was frowning at Harada-san.

"Okita-san..." I didn't know what suddenly came over them. "You guys shouldn't be fighting. We should be focusing on how to rescue Hijikata-san." I saw Kondou-san nod.

"Yukimura is right. Right now is not the time for romance." I nodded

in agreement. _Wait a minute..._

"R-romance?!" My hands went to my cheek to cover up the blush. Heisuke's eyes went wide.

"Wh-what?! These two and Chizuru?!" Okita and Harada looked away from each other. Heisuke leaped in front of me.

"No way! I won't allow that!"

Nagakura sighed. "Can we just get back to the point?" Kondou coughed awkwardly and I thought I saw Saito steal a glance at me and then looked away, flustered.

This is getting ridiculous. These guys should know better when a situation comes up, they should focus on the task at hand.

"Let's go back to the dens and strategize on what we can do next." I started to walk by myself away from them.

"Wait for us Chizuru!" I looked over my shoulder and saw them walking to me. I smiled.

I can trust these guys with even my life.

* * *

><p>"Alright so what's the plan?"</p>

I felt like a general, planning a huge war like this. Everyone sat in a circle and I was center.

Okita spoke up first. "How bout we just go down there and beat the crap out of them?"

Heisuke lightly slapped Okita's shoulder. "Want a repeat on what happened to you?" Okita glared at him and then sighed.

"I think that we should try to negotiate with them." They all turned to me, shocked.

"What? I don't want to spill any blood." Besides, this is my responsibility.

"I don't think we can get back in." We looked at Saito who got back from patrol.

"What do you mean?" I asked. He took a seat next to me.

"I went to check on the hot spring again, but when I tried to move the rock, it wouldn't budge." Everyone's eyes widened.

"Damn. Now what do we do?" Nagakura scratched his head in frustration. I tapped my chin in thought.

"Kazama..."

Harada looked at me. "What?" I slapped a fist to my hand.

"Kazama can help us!"

Heisuke frowned. "Are you crazy?! You do remember that he's a demon and not a friendly one I might add." I turned to Heisuke.

"But he saved all us back there. Besides, I think if I convince him that I'm on his side, I can get in with his teleportation powers!" Everyone got silent.

"It's risky..." Okita closed his eyes. Kondou nodded in agreement.

"You shouldn't do anything that would danger you." I stood up and raised a fist.

"I'm the only one that can get in with Kazama's help. You shouldn't always worry about me, I'm a big girl."

"I don't like it." Heisuke looked up at me. "But I trust your resolve." he gave me a grin.

"Heisuke-kun..." Everyone else smiled.

"We've lived together for too long. I know you'll do the right thing."

"Uh huh. But I still don't like the idea of letting a young woman fighting for us."

"Saito-san. Harada-san."

"Don't blame me when we have to go save you."

"You can do it, Chizuru!"

"Okita-san. Nagakura-san."

I looked around the room and felt tears stinging my eye.

"Thank you. Everyone!" Kondou got up and placed his hands on my shoulders.

"Hijikata's fate rests in your hand. Be careful."

* * *

><p>I waited down at the lake. For the first -and probably the last-time, I was dressed in a kimono. It was different from the one I came to Mibu Forest with, but it'll work.</p>

My hair was up in a bun with my two silver pins holding it up.

I heard rustling in the trees behind me and I knew that the wolves were getting restless. They promised to stay put unless Kazama tried to attack me.

"Kazama-san!" I called out to the water.

Nothing.

Then I saw the water give tiny ripples and Kazama appeared in front

of me.

He was wearing a different attire than before. Western clothing like Hijikata, but it was a dark shade of purple.

"So the little princess calls out to me. What do you want?"

I clenched my fists together to keep them from shaking.

"I realized that I can't be of any use in the human world." I looked at him straight in the eye. "I want to come with you to get rid of my other half and to rule."

He kept his cool composure until I saw his lips come up to a small smile.

"Oh? What brought this change of mind?"

I stood my ground. "It disgusts me that I have to live life knowing that another part of me is running around causing trouble." I hope that excuse worked!

He continued to stare at me with those crimson eyes of his.

I saw his hand reach out and touched my face.

"Hmm. It seems that you have grown wiser with living with those dogs."

I trembled against his touch but still kept a determined face. I saw his eyes flickered behind me and then back to me.

"That's why I chose you as my wife." His fingers moved to my lips. He looked down at me with desire in his eyes. But then he dropped his hand and chuckled.

"We will continue this later." He leaned in closer. "You do look beautiful with a kimono on."

I blushed and looked away. "Can we just go now?" He backed away.

"So impatient. But I like it." He grabbed my hand and pulled me closer to his body. Flames erupted from the ground and I took one last glance at the wolves until the flames swallowed me whole.

* * *

><p>I landed on a soft cushion and saw that I was in a bedroom.</p>

"K-Kazama-san?..."

I glanced left and right. No one was in the room. A single bed was what I was on and no doors could be seen anywhere.

I felt the bed move and saw that there was something under the covers.

Shaking, I clasped the edge of the sheets and pulled it over.

I gasped at the sight.

It was Hijikata-san, but something was wrong. His breathing was too rapid and his western coat was drenched in blood. My eyes widened at the sight of it.

Oh no... Not right now!

I shut my eyes and waited for the bloodlust to come.

... Nothing.

I took a peek. Still nothing. Then a thought came to me.

The bloodlust probably came from when my other half was still connected to me.

I gulped. He looked terrible. I have to help him.

Slowly, I began to unbutton his coat, carefully trying not to touch his skin. I saw the bare of his chest and that made my heart beat faster.

Suddenly his eyes flew open and he pushed me down.

"Ahh!"

My pins came undone and they dropped to the floor with a clink.

"H-Hijikata-san...?"

He stared at me like I was some sort of specimen. My hands were pinned to my sides. No where to run. I saw his face lean closer to mine. I slammed my eyes shut.

"What are you doing to her?" I blinked and turned my head. Kazama was standing at the far end of the wall. A frown on his face. I stared at him.

"Kazama-san..."

* * *

><p>This chapter was too suspenseful to write! _

**OMG did you guys hear about the new Hakuoki Movie?! Its called Hakuoki Kyoto Ranbu! Theres two parts to it so this is part one and its coming out Aug. 24, 2013! **

AHHH! xDDDD

(Sorry fangirling moment xP)

Next Chapter: A Killing with the Wolves

A Killing with the Wolves

~~~

>Hijikata stared at Kazama, a fire burning in his eyes. His lips opened slowly as if to speak.<p>

"K... Ka... zama..."

He then turned back down to look at me.

"Ch... Chi... zuru..." I trembled. He wasn't the same Hijikata-san I knew.

This creature in front of me was hungry. Hungry for my blood. His eyes were wide open and was staring deep into my soul.

"You really want me to kill you, huh?" Kazama took a step forward.

"Wait."

I turned my head to Kazama. He growled and stood his ground.

I looked back at Hijikata. "You... Your not okay, right?"

He gaped at me. His lips shook as he spoke. "I... I'm not?"

I shook my head. It's like talking to a newborn. I have to keep calm.

"I... I can help you." I lifted a hand to his cheek. He stiffened but didn't pull away.

I closed my eyes and concentrated on my demon power. \_I got this. I learned how to keep it under control. Focus.\_ I opened my eyes and saw my reflection in his. My eyes were bright red and I swallowed nervously.

I looked deep into his heart and searched for Hijikata. He stiffened.

I heard Kazama chuckle. "It seems like you mastered the demon control technique."

\_So that's what it's called.\_

\* \* \*

><p>I didn't intentionally wanted to learn that, but one day I saw a rabbit out in the woods and I followed it. I thought it heard me because it turned around and stared at me. I looked back at it.<p>

I so wanted to pet it!

But then it suddenly hopped to me with a weird look in its eyes. That scared me so I ran away.

After that day I was more curious to see if I could do it again. So I practiced from time to time.

\* \* \*

><p>I stared into Hijikata. This time I won't run.</p>

His eye twitched and then something unexpected happened.

I saw his lips lower onto mine and before I knew it, he was kissing me.

"Mmm..?!"

His lips were cold and was pressed hard against my own. My eyes widened and I felt my pulse begin to race.\_ I couldn't imagine him doing this with me!\_

I was sweating with exhilaration. This kiss felt nothing like Kazama's. It wasn't as forceful but gentle and comforting.

I gripped the bed sheets and tried to pull myself away from Hijikata.

Suddenly, I smelled smoke. I heard Kazama's voice again, but this time it was twined with fury. "You... You disgusting dog!"

Hijikata leaped off of me and the bed in time to dodge an incoming fireball. It smashed into the wall next to me and sizzled out.

"Kazama-san?!" I sat up and saw Hijikata leap towards Kazama.

He flew through the air and shifted. I expected to see a black wolf land, it's eyes glinting with success. But it wasn't.

Instead, horns grew from his forehead and I saw a white pointed tail grow from the lower of his back. His eyes glowed scarlet red.

I gasped. "A... A demon..."

Kazama snarled and dodged the attack. He held out a hand and shot a barrage of fireballs, each missing Hijikata as he swiftly evaded them.

"So that's how you want to play it huh?" Kazama lowered his hand. "Well two can play it that game."

My eyes widened. Just like Hijikata-san, two horns grew from atop Kazama's head and a pointed tail. But his weren't white. They were red.

I saw Kazama flick his tail. "This, is the power of a true demon!"

Hijikata frowned and lunged for Kazama again. I expected Kazama to dodge the attack, but he was just standing there.

"Kazama-san!" I screamed as Hijikata's fist made contact with Kazama's left cheek. The blow made him waver a bit but it looked like it didn't faze him at all. Instead, I saw him smile.

"That was your best shot?" Hijikata looked shocked as to why his

punch didn't leave him out cold.

Kazama rubbed his cheek and glared at Hijikata. "I'll show you what real powers are like!"

I saw flames gather above Kazama's head and it arranged itself to look like a spear. He grabbed onto it, took a step back and then threw it straight for Hijikata.

Instincts took over as I jumped off the bed and stood in front of Hijikata. "No! I won't let you kill him!"

I saw the tip of the spear and imagined how painful it will hurt once it pierced me. Suddenly I saw the spear stop midway and then disintegrate.

Kazama had his hand out and growled. "Are you a fool? Do you want to die?"

I trembled and backed up to Hijikata.

"I can't let him die."

I felt a hand on my shoulder and looked up. His horns were gone, so was his tail. His once blood-colored eyes were now back to its mesmerizing violet.

"You really are an idiot." Hijikata-san, was back.

Tears sprung from my eyes and I quickly tried to wipe them off. "I'm glad you're not hurt."

He gave me a warm smile. "Ya."

I saw Kazama shake with anger.

"This... This was your plan all along. To try to save this... Dog..."

Hijikata moved in front of me and placed his arms around my midsection. "I'll protect you, Chizuru."

Kazama's eyes shone with hatred like no other. "It's not over yet! I will have my princess!"

That last sentence echoed as flames surrounded him and then he was gone. Silence filled the room as the smoke quickly diminished.

My head made the room spun and before I knew it I collapsed.

\* \* \*

><p>I had no idea what just happened, but when I awoke, I was back at dens.</p>

My head ached and my vision was blurry. I blinked a couple of times to clear away the fog.

"Are you awake?"

I slowly turned my head.

"Hijikata-san?"

I felt a hand lay itself on my forehead. It was warm and that soothed my heart.

"I'm glad you're not hurt." I shut my eyes again and breathed slowly.

"Ya. But are you okay, Hijikata-san?"

The hand on me came off and that left my head cold. I blinked and sat up. "Hijikata-san?"

He had a faraway look in his eyes. His hair swayed gently in the wind. It was hard to imagine him with shorter hair. But it did look handsome on him.

"I wonder when this will all end."

I tilted my head to the side. "Huh?"

He closed his eyes and laughed. "All this madness that's been happening... I don't think I can take it all in."

I lowered my head. "But you've always held on. Hijikata-san is a strong-willed person. I would never imagine him giving up even for the toughest situation." He's been through a lot. First being cursed into living in Mibu forest as a wolf, and then being turned into a half demon.

A tear made its way down my cheek. I hugged my knees tighter. Hijikata noticed and brought his arms around my shoulder, drawing me closer to him.

"But if none of this ever happened, I wouldn't have met you." I held my breath.

"Hijikata-san..."

\_ He really meant it, didn't he?\_

I sniffed and wiped a tear away. My head tilted up and I looked at his eyes. The same violet that had me mesmerized the day I entered Mibu forest and everything changed in my life.

I shut my eyes and brought my lips up to his. My heart beat faster as he accepted the kiss and responded back. It wasn't as forceful as the one he gave me in the bedroom. He drew back and looked at me.

"What turned you on all of a sudden?"

I looked away shyly. "I just wanted to do it, that's all." \_I'm such a bad liar.\_

He continued to stare at me and then turned away.

"Um Hijikata-san? How did we get back to the dens?" That hadn't

occurred to me until now.

"After you passed out, a wind came around us and it brought us here."

\_A wind huh? \_

"That's strange."

"Isn't everything strange these days?"

I laughed. Hijikata smiled.

"Well, I better go find the guys and plan out our next move." He began to get up but I grabbed onto his hand.

"Huh? What's wrong."

I stared at the ground. "You... Shouldn't push yourself too hard. You just got transformed into a demon, so it might be hard to stay sane." It took me a while until I could suppress the blood lust in me and I was only a half demon.

Hijikata-san just got turned yesterday, so who knows how hard it will hit him.

"I know I can control it. After all," he looked at me. "You are the person who is keeping me sane."

\* \* \*

><p>He left afterwards, leaving me alone in the dens, his last sentence ringing in my ears. <em>I'm the person who is keeping him from becoming a monster... Even though I was born one.</em>

I walked over to the bucket of water and splashed some water onto my face. The coldness shocked me, but it made me feel more alert. Drops fell from my face as I shook my head.

My eyes widened as I felt a small burn in the center of my chest. I placed my hand over it and it got worse. \_Crap. What now?\_

I steadied myself on the walls of the cave and made my way over to my mat.

I fell to my knees and began to pant heavily. I then felt it subside. I raised my hands up to my face. \_Am I slowly becoming more like my demon self?\_

I pressed both my hands together and prayed. \_Let all this madness be over. I can't live like this when at any time, my friends could be dying.\_

A rumbling sound was heard from the entrance of the cave and I jumped up. I ran to the sound and found myself staring at a bunch of fallen rocks, blocking the entrance. Only a sliver of sunlight shone through a small indent in the fall.

"Hello?! Can anyone hear me?!"

No answer. Well of course no one can hear me. They were all down at the lake waiting for me to return!

I sighed.

"Finally we can continue where we left off."

I jerked and spun around. I came face to face with the other me. "How did you escape your cave?!" I stood shocked.

"There are some things that can be granted when asked nicely of." She grinned. "I know you stole Hijikata-san from me and now I will kill you and then take him back!"

I shook with fear. I saw her unsheathed a short sword from her waist. "I will kill you with my family heirloom!"

I backed up until I felt the rockfall behind me. "Please... Don't do this!"

She pointed her sword at me. "You stole everything from me, and now I will take yours!"

She lunged and I reacted by holding out both of my hands in front of me. I felt a searing burn erupt from my hands and flew towards her. It was some sort of blue light, and it burned my hands.

It hit her square in the chest and dissolved within her. She fell on her back and started to scream.

My eyes widened as I saw the blue flame inside her body make its way towards her heart. Her back arched as the flame swallowed her heart.

I slapped my hands over my mouth, tears streaming down my face. She kept on screaming until her body was nothing but dust.

I fell to my knees, shaking with uncontrollable fear. My heart pounded in my chest, threatening to tear out.

"I killed her..." I sobbed.

"Chizuru? Hey can you hear me?!" I heard Hijikata's voice on the other side of the wall. I don't want any of them to see what I just done.

I just began to sob uncontrollably.

"She's crying in there, we have to get her out!" Heisuke shouted. No I don't want to be saved. I've sinned by killing a person.

I wiped away the tears and stood up.

In the pile of dust was Chizuru's family short sword. I walked over to it and picked it up. This sword was supposed to slain my blood. Instead it didn't get to fulfill its purpose.

I hid the sword in a secret compartment under my mat.

I heard another rumble and saw the rocks fall.

Sunlight welcomed itself in and I saw the men stood in at the entrance.

I probably knew what they saw.

Me, red and puffed up from crying with my hands swollen from burning a corpse and a pile of dust next to me. I stared at them and gave them a sad smile.

"I killed her."

Kondou took a step forward. "You... Killed who?"

I made a gesture to the pile of dust next to me.

"Chizuru."

Everyone held their breath. "Are you okay though?" Heisuke held out a hand. I turned away.

"Killing someone makes me okay?"

Everyone got silent again.

"Can I just be alone for a bit?"

With that said I ran from the dens. I heard my name being called from my friends who worried about me. I kept on going towards the edge of the forest. Where I first met the wolves.

I stopped in the clearing and saw the familiar bush where my kimono got caught in, a piece of it still hung there. I panted as I tried to get my breath back. From the very beginning, where I met the wolves, until I murdered a person. It all began here.

I laughed at myself.

"All because I was trying to be a good citizen."

The wind picked up and blew at hair. I moved it out of the way and saw a silhouette coming towards the forest.

My eyes widened. I don't want that person to be cursed here as well!

"Hey! Don't come near here!"

The person moved closer. I squinted to get a better look.

He wore what seems like a white lab coat. Someone from the states? The sun shone down and I saw someone who I would never have dreamed of seeing until now.

"Sannan-san?!"

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Ya this chapter is a short one. Sorry about that ;P. But

anyways, I changed the arrangement of past chapters so it will be easier to read! I realized that I crammed so much information into one paragraph and even I lost my place where I was reading!  
xD<strong>

\*\*Next Chapter: An Experiment with the Wolves\*\*

## 20. Side Story : Hijikata's Blunder

\*\*Side Story : Hijikata's Blunder\*\*

Hijikata: Please don't tell the guys about this. It's already bad enough with Souji knowing.

Chizuru: I won't! I'm happy to teach Hijikata-san how to cook!

Hijikata: Shh! Not so loud!

Chizuru: Sorry! Well, lets just start with cutting the meat. Now hold the knife like so.

Hijikata: Like this?

Chizuru: Ahh! Don't just cut straight down the middle! That's where-

Hijikata: Uhg! The blood squirted out of it!

Chizuru: Hijikata-san! It's okay! Don't swing the knife so dangerously!

Hijikata: If I don't, blood will be stuck to it!

Chizuru: Just wash it off later! Okay, let's get back to cutting it!

Hijikata: ...Fine.

Chizuru: Now try slicing it into thin strips, like this.

Hijikata: ...Like this?

Chizuru: Uh huh! You're getting the hang of it!

Hijikata: Of course I am, what kind of commander am I if I can't cook?

Chizuru: Obviously a clueless one if he can't even cut a piece of meat.

Hijikata: You say something?

Chizuru: Nothing! Nothing at all!

## 21. An Experiment with the Wolves

\*\*An Experiment with the Wolves\*\*

"Sannan-san, is that really you?"

He gave me a sad smile. "Were you expecting someone else?"

I shook my head. This whole time I thought he was held captive.  
\_Well, that's what Kazama had stated.\_ "How did you escape?"

He stopped at the barrier line between Mibu forest and the crossroads. "It wasn't really that hard."

I crossed my arms, deep in thought as to how he escaped. "Did you go somewhere afterwards? I see you're wearing a lab coat from the states."

He chuckled and pushed his glasses up. "Actually, I escaped a while ago and decided to pay a visit to your father: Yukimura Kodo."

My eyes widened. "My father? Is he okay?"

Sannan smiled. "Of course he is. I just had to pick something up from him. That's all."

I tilted my head to the head. "A new experiment of his?" Father has been working on this new kind of potion that was supposed to grant you immortality.

He stepped into the barrier. "Correct. Now, are the other men still around?"

I nodded slowly. "They are at the dens."

He acknowledged me and took a few paces forward. "Well aren't you coming?"

I stood my ground, hands clenched into fists. "You go on ahead. I'll..." I swallowed and looked back at him. "I'll catch up."

He smiled again and went on his way.

I stared at the barrier which was a passage way back into the normal world. \_What's wrong with me?! I can't go back and face them after what I've done! No one wants a killer living with them...\_

I held out a hand, hesitant about touching the barrier and seeing if I disintegrate on the spot. My finger was only centimeters away and I could feel the electricity boiling from it.

"Being rash again I see."

I quickly pulled my hand away and turned around. Kazama was just as how he looked like a day ago when he was trying to kill Hijikata-san. "Wha-what are you doing here, Kazama-san?!"

He smiled. "So I'm not permitted to this area? Even though I was the one who put up this barrier."

I looked away. I heared a chuckle escape his lips. "Anyways. You must know why I came here."

I gritted my teeth. "Isn't this act getting a little old?" I felt a hand rest itself on my shoulder.

"But I've noticed that you enjoy it. Me kidnapping you and then your handsome wolves come to save you, am I right?" I blushed and pushed his hand away.

"Th-that's not true!" I turned to face him. "But you already know that I won't marry you." I'm too young to be thinking of marriage!

He sighed. "You say that, but I know one day you will have the hots for me."

I stuck my tongue out at him. "In your dreams maybe." Hopefully not in mine.

Kazama grinned. "Now lets get back to why I'm here. I've heard you killed the other Chizuru."

I held my breath. The memory of her screeching out in pain haunted me. "How did you know?"

He ran a hand through his hair. "News travel fast when you're a demon."

Tears began to stream down my face. "It's not like I meant to kill her! It was an accident!" I covered my face with my hands and started bawling. What did I do to kill her? Could I do it again? What if I accidentally killed one of my friends? Questions swirled around my mind like a tornado, smashing one question to the other.

Suddenly I felt drawn into the arms of Kazama. He had one arm wrapped around my shoulders and I lowered my hand from my face.

"Kazama-san..."

He didn't look at me but had a grim expression. "Killing happens when least expected. She would have been killed sooner or later." I looked up at him. "Heh. But I never liked her anyways." He gave a small smile.

I wiped the tears away. "If you're trying to cheer me up, then just forget about it." I don't think that a murder will be something that I could forget even if I tried to.

I clamped my hands together and prayed that her ghost will leave me alone. Or rather that she will never come near me. I've been to busy worrying that I almost forgot that my head was resting on Kazama's chest.

My ear pressed against it and I heard the sound of his heart beat. "You say you're a demon. But you have a heart." I heard a chuckle escape his lips.

"I think you're the one acting cold now. Of course we have hearts. What do you take us for? Zombies?"

I stifled back a laugh. "I... I didn't mean that..." I flinched as I

felt him lay his chin on my head. "K-Kazama-san..."

I could hear my heart thumping deep in my chest.

"I know what you really want to do."

I swallowed. "Re-really...?"

I felt him smile. "You want to get out of Mibu forest and back into your normal life. Right?"

My eyes looked down. Did I want that? Maybe once when I first heard about that I would be trapped here, but now I'm not so sure. All the memories I've made with the wolves were fun and enjoyable moments. I still wanted to help them break the curse, or did I care more about me than them?

"I... I..." I didn't know what to say.

I felt his head lift up and he released me from the embrace. "How about I make you a deal."

I stared at him. "A deal?"

He nodded. "If I take you outside of the barriers for one whole day, you'll have to spend that day with me."

I clenched the fists together. Did I want that? But it's only just for an entire day, that couldn't hurt... Right?

"I... accept your deal."

I saw him smile and held out his hand. "So, shall we go then?"

My eyes widened. "Right now?"

His eyes bore into mine. "Of course. Or would you rather not accept that opportunity?"

I shook my head. "No. I just thought that it was too soon." I didn't have anything ready yet! But I accepted his hand and to my surprise, his hand was warm. My hand fitted into his large hand and that made me more at ease for what was coming.

I saw him mutter some words I didn't catch, and the barrier started to waver, like ripples in a pond.

"W-wow..." I stared in awe at this scene. I felt him tug at my hand and I followed him through the barrier, back into the life I've had before this all started.

\* \* \*

><p>"Well, this is my house."</p>

We stood in front of the place that I had previously lived in with my "father" Yukimura Kodo. "It's smaller than I would have imagined." Kazama rubbed his chin.

I narrowed my eyes at him. "Well not everyone was born into a rich

family."

I heard him laugh. "Hardly. But let's take a look inside..." He began to walk towards the door. My hand shot out and grabbed onto his.

"You... You shouldn't just barge into someone's house before being invited! That's bad manners."

He looked at me in surprise and then did something unexpected. He went down on one knee and held onto my hand. "May I kindly visit the home of my future wife?"

My face grew hot and I jerked my hand away and turned around. "Idiot. Stop acting like the gentlemen that you are obviously not and I'm not your future wife!"

I heard his footsteps retreat and I spun around. He was already at the door. "Hey! Kazama-san!" I ran up to him.

He was back to his uncaring self as he opened the door and walked in first. I rolled my eyes and followed him in. The musty odor of home hit me as I remembered the time I was taken in by "father". I gasped as I stared at the empty house.

Everything was gone, taken, not a single item was present. It was like walking into a haunted mansion. Dust was littered on every surface, the floorboards creaked as we made our way in.

"Well... Nice place you got here. Where do you sleep, outside where it's much cleaner?" Kazama made his snarky remark. I sucked in a breath. The house seemed like no one even entered it before I left.

"What had happened here?" I muttered.

I made my way down the hall and stopped in front of a door. Kazama followed me.

"My room." I addressed. I twisted the handle and it creaked open. Like in the living room, everything wasn't here. I walked towards the one window in my dust ridden end room and knelt down. I brushed away the dirt and sneezed.

"Heh. Your sneeze is quite cute." Kazama commented. I rubbed my nose and sighed. What a flirt.

I began to hit the floorboards with my knuckles, trying to find that hollow spot... Ahh here it is. I pushed at one end of the board and the other end lifted up.

"Hiding secrets are we?" Kazama looked over my shoulder. I stuck my hand down the compartment.

"We'll see..."

I felt the pile of papers and picked them up. Thankfully, it wasn't covered in dust like the rest of the place. "These are the notes of my fathers latest experiment."

I shook the papers until something flew out of it and landed on the ground next to me. "What's this?"

The photograph -what I think it is- was in black and white form, probably taken a few years ago. On it was a man that looked like my father, but in his younger years and next to him stood another man with circle-rim glasses. He was holding a tiny vial of some sort of liquid in it. But what scared me the most was that while the rest of the picture was black and white, the vial with the liquid was red.

"I thought that there wasn't anything left in this place." He leaned against the wall in front of me. I looked up to meet his gaze.

"Before my father left, he told me that he was going to work on some sort of potion that could grant immortality. The very idea scared me, since it has never been done before. He had these very notes containing secrets that could very well be the end of man kind. I stole the notes and his them here, although I never actually read anything on it."

Kazama frowned. "I never thought you would be the type who would rebel against her own father." He then smiled. "But I guess I could live with that."

I rolled my eyes and stared at the picture again. The man with the glasses somehow looked very familiar. A glare was shone on one side of his glasses and then it hit me. "Sannan-san..."

Of course! It all made sense! Him going to the states to meet my father. The red vial... Sannan-san was helping my father to create it! But why was he suddenly back? I frowned. All this doesn't add up.

"The more you frown, the more likely you will get wrinkles when you're older and that will not be pretty."

Kazama was suddenly in front of me. He surprised me so I dropped all the papers and they bounced off my knee, scattering on to the floor. "Kazama-san?"

He leaned closer and instinctively I moved my head back. He lightly pushed me and I was soon sprawled on my back with Kazama looming over me. His hands were on either side of my head and my hands were also sprawled out.

"You do not know how hard it is to keep myself from kidnapping you."

I blushed and averted my gaze from his. I heard him chuckle and flinched as he moved his head towards my neck. "S-stop it. Kazama-san..." I hope he didn't hear my heart pounding wildly in my chest.

I felt his hair tickling my face and I shut my eyes. He took in a breath and then pulled away. "I'm just teasing you."

He got off me and I sat up, my face still a pink color. I began to gather up the files and the photograph. "Now where shall we go next?"

Kazama asked me.

I stood up and dusted the dirt off my shorts with my free hand. "Umm. Lets try the mochi stand! I haven't had their mochi in forever!" I saw him smile and he followed me out of the house.

\* \* \*

><p>"Please come again!" The shop owners voice came from inside the tiny shack.<p>

I held the box of nine mouthwatering mochi and went over to the bench. I placed the box between me and Kazama and placed my hands together. "Thank you for the food!"

I picked up the seseame mochi and popped it into my mouth. "Delicious! Huh, Kazama-san aren't you going to have one?"

He stared at the peanut flavored mochi that was in his fingers. "I do not know what these are or if they are safe to eat."

I stared at him. "What? Dont be silly! Here!" I took the mochi from his fingers and held it up to his mouth. He looked at it and then grinned. He opened his mouth and I put it into his mouth. Unfortunately, my fingers were in his mouth and he licked them.

I jerked away. "What are doing?!"

His tongue flicked out and licked his lips. "I wanted to see how you taste like."

I blushed and looked away. A few women walked past us and I heard them whisper.

"Look at that young couple over there."

"I know, couldn't they do their business somewhere else?"

My head lowered as I tried to hide embarrassed face. Kazama, however, gave a satisfactory grin and looked at me out of the cornor of his eye.

\* \* \*

><p>We quickly finished the mochi and were now just taking a stroll around town.<p>

"Are you thinking of them?"

I looked up at Kazama. "Who?" It was a dumb question and I already knew who he was talking about. But I didn't want to admit it.

"You know, those dogs." He retorted. I refocused my attention on the road in front of me.

How were they doing, I wonder. Did they realize that I was gone yet? "I guess so..." This is what I called lying to myself. I couldn't stop thinking about them! Ever since I left one of the wolves would pop up in my mind and that was that.

But I had another reason for worry about them. A feeling that I couldn't shake off my mind.

"Is that so..." Kazama picked up his pace and turned a corner, I quickly followed. At the end of the alley was an abandoned well.

I think it is abandoned since the rope was gone and the paint was peeling. He stood at the edge and beckoned me closer. Confused, I went up to him.

"What is it?" I asked. I looked down the well. Water was still in there which surprised me. He flicked his hand over the surface of the water and a picture began to form. Mibu forest appeared and my eyes widened. "How'd you do that?"

I saw him shrug and he flicked his hand again. The picture dissolved and then faces appeared. I saw every one of the wolves in their human form, walking around the forest calling for something or someone.

But what really stood out was their hair. They all cut it short, just like Hijikata. I blushed slightly as Heisuke's face appeared with his hair cut. He looks more manly like that.

I quickly covered my mouth with my hand to hide the ridiculous grin I was putting on. I heard Kazama sigh and waved his hand again. The image shivered and then I saw all of them backed up against the edge of the lake. But wait. One of them was missing: Kondou-san.

"Hey, where's Kondou-san?" Kazama said nothing as the image shifted once again. In front of them was Sannan-san holding what seemed like a clear vile. A drip fell from the mouth piece and on to the ground. Where I saw Kondou-san laying in a pool of blood.

I jerked back and began to shake. "Wha-what the hell... Happened..."

Kazama frowned. "It seems like this Sannan person drank that vile and killed Kondou." I hugged the stack of papers close to my chest. What was father trying to do with his experiment?

"I... I have to get over there to help them!" I panicked. I have to get over there fast, or who knows what may happen if I wait.

"I figured you'd say that." I glanced at Kazama, his face back into its uncaring mode. "You're a good woman who sticks with her ideals. I respect that."

Does he? I still don't know much about Kazama-san, what his purpose is, if he is someone I can trust. But I know that someday everything will be revealed to me.

Kazama took my free hand into his. "Don't let go." The flames came next, it engulfed us and whisked us away.

\* \* \*

><p>It dropped us on to the ground and I landed on my bottom.</p>

"Ow..." I rubbed my butt and looked up at Kazama. "Are we really back?"

He said nothing as he stared ahead. I followed his gaze and saw the entrance of Mibu forest, the same sight as I first came into contact with it.

"I'm home..."

I flinched. Did I just say home? I gripped the papers tighter, maybe I'm going crazy but after two months living with the wolves, I feel like I have a meaning here. A purpose even. They are my family, and family don't abandon one another. I wiped away an incoming tear and stood up.

"You really have the intention of helping them, huh?"

Kazama had his back turned to me but I knew that he wasn't happy. I walked up to him.

"They mean the world to me. All the times I've spent, both fun and sad, I feel as one with them!" A breeze came and went, blowing at my hair.

He said nothing as he turned around and planted a kiss on my lips. My eyes widened and I gingerly touched the spot where he made contact with. I saw him smile.

"I'll make sure I attack you, next time." He raised a hand and disappeared in a cloud of smoke.

My heart did not slow down, but kept on racing. I guess Kazama did have a good intention after all. I smiled and made my way towards the barrier.

My family was in there, I need to get to them! The familiarness of the forest hit me as I carried both my feet through the barrier.

I was back in Mibu forest.

\* \* \*

><p>Trees flew past as I summoned my demon powers and ran at a speed that normal humans couldn't even compare to.</p>

I've seen Kazama and Hijikata grow horns and a tail but I still haven't seen any sign of mine. I shook my head as I continued forward.

Focus Chizuru! We're here to save the wolves!

I clutched the papers tighter, hoping that they won't fly off. As the lake came into view, I couldn't help but think that if I did come face to face with Sannan-san, would I have to fight him? The end of the road came up ahead and I leaped.

If I don't have a choice, I guess I will fight him. Anything to protect my family! I landed on top of the big rock and stared down at the men.

"I'm back guys!"

Heisuke was the first to greet me. "Chizuru?! Oh man I was worried sick about you!" When he realized what he just said he blushed and looked down. The other men made sly looks at the brown haired fighter. I also blushed and leaped down.

That's when I noticed Sannan-san was gone, also with Kondou's body. I immediately reacted to the pool of blood in front of me and stepped back. I tripping on my own feet and fell backwards, only to be caught by Saito. I

looked over my shoulder and noticed that he had also cut his hair. "Th-thank you, Saito-san!" I stuttered and re adjusted myself. He said nothing but gave me a small smile.

I turned around to look at the wolves. Each one had cut his hair short and wore a western uniform like Hijikata-san. But I couldn't help but blush at the sight of these handsome men.

"Chizuru, what's that in your hand?" Hijikata's voice snapped me back into the present.

"Oh! These are the files that pertains to that vile that Sannan-san drank!" I held them out and gave them to Hijikata. He accepted them and began shifting through it. "I'll look at them later."

Okita walked up to me and grinned. "So where were you? I missed you." I stiffened as he brushed away a strand of hair from my face.

"I... I was..." How could I tell everyone that I wanted to leave this place before I realized that I actually have a home here? I was about to answer when I heard a shout from behind me.

"Hey! Everyone!"

Nagakura and Harada came up to us and was shocked at my arrival home.

"Chizuru?! When did you come home?" Nagakura picked me up and spun me around in the air.

"Wah! It's good to see you to Nagakura-san!" I laughed until he gently set me down.

Harada came over and placed a hand on my shoulder. "Good to see you back." I smiled at him. "It's good to be home."

Nagakura started to speak. "We didn't find any trace of Sannan-san or Kondou-san. All we found were droplets of blood that led out of Mibu forest."

I blinked. Blood, at the entrance of the forest... How come I didn't see any? Surely Sannan-san left before I came back, so what was going on?

I opened my mouth to spill out the whole truth when a voice was heard atop of the hill.

"Heh. All the wolves are together. This is going to be easier than I

thought."

We turned to the direction of the sound. I gasped. "Y-you..."

She smiled. "I'm back~" she said in a sing songy voice.

Indeed, my -supposedly dead- evil counterpart: Yukimura Chizuru was back and she had the look of a crazed demon.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Sorry I havent updated in like two weeks, but i had my first Cambridge exam and i had to study for it. Im having a few more for the next two weeks so i wont be able to update in a while... But dont worry! i'll be sure to update A.S.A.P! <strong>

\*\*A reminder: May 24 is coming up so the polls for "Love Potion" will soon be over, Dont forget to vote for your favorite guy! 3\*\*

## 22. A Rematch with the Wolves

\*\*A Rematch with the Wolves\*\*

"I-I thought that you were dead!"

I didn't know how or why, but she was alive and obviously pissed, mostly about me.

"Do I look dead to you?" She leaped from the hill and landed a few yards away from us. The wolves quickly formed a protective circle around me.

"Wait." I raised my voice so she could hear. The wolves were taken aback but still made way for me to step out into the clearing.

"Chizuru, what are you doing?" Heisuke whispered to me through clenched teeth. I stopped next to him and glanced over. "This is my fight." I continued onward and stopped a few feet away from my evil half.

"Oh? So the not-so-brave girl decided to try to show me up? After you ran away from this place and after you killed me?" I clenched my fists together, heat rising up to my face.

"That was from the past!" I heard her laugh.

"Past? That was yesterday you slut!" My eye twitched as I tried to control my anger.

"True. But that was before I realized something important to me." I addressed the wolves with my hand. They looked surprised as I said my next statement.

"The family that I hold dear to me! I want to protect them as they protected me in the past!" Tears streamed down my face but I continued anyways. "I admit that I was weak back then. They protected me from everything that was directed towards me. It didn't even concerned them, but they still came to my rescue while I was standing

by the sidelines. I was a wimp."

She didn't seem any different as I told her my story. But that didn't matter. What mattered was that the people behind me heard this speech about how I really am grateful to them. I wiped away the tears and glared at her. "Alright. No more sappy stories! You came here to have a rematch with me am I right?"

That her attention. "About time you noticed!" She pulled out an identical sword that looked like her short sword (which I still have). She noticed me staring at the sword and smirked. "Another Yukimura treasure. The long sword."

She pulled it out of its sheath and pointed it at me. The light bounced off the sword and glinted in the sunlight. "Hey, that's not fair! You have a weapon!" I shouted at her.

Her smirk quickly turned into a frown. "You really are stupid huh? Remember the last time we fought, you barely had anything to throw at me and yet you killed me." The memory of the strange blue light that erupted out of my hands made me shiver. I had never wanted that to happen again.

"Quit stalling for time!" I looked up and saw her change. Horns grew out of her forehead and a pointed tail. They were both red, showing that she was one hundred percent demon.

I gulped and tried to focus on my own demonic power. Soon I felt an itch on my forehead and lower back. I heard a flick of a tail, which surprisingly was mine. "Damn..."

I had just transformed into a demon.

Just like my counterpart, mine were crimson red. Not sure what to do next, I decided to let her make the first move. She looked surprised at first but then scowled. "You really want to die, huh?"

I said nothing. If I killed her this time, will she be back for more? Is she going to keep popping out in my life until she killed me? Wait... Can I even die? Being a demon just like her, will I revive? I shuddered. I do not want to test that out.

"Yaa!" I heard her scream rip through the air, sword in a thrusting movement and I reacted by moving my arm in a circle motion in front of me. A gust of wind appeared and suddenly I was on the top of the hill. I just teleported.

My counter part stared at the spot where I was currently at.  
"Chizuru!" I heard the yells of the wolves call my name.

"I'm fine! Don't worry about me!"

"Oh I would start worrying right about now." The voice sounded in front of me and another gust of wind came, revealing my twin, sword in hand. She swung the sword and I quickly -but sloppily- dodged the attack. Pain immediately erupted from my arm.

"Errk!" Her sword sliced the skin of my arm and blood came gushing out. She lunged at me, but I once again drew the circle pattern and disappeared in a gust of wind. This time I appeared next to the

wolves.

I stumbled as I landed, gripping tightly on to my arm with blood oozing out of it.

"Hey, are you gonna keep running away like a coward?!" My counterpart yelled at me from the same spot.

Was I going to keep running? That's what I'm used to doing whenever there's danger. But in truth, I never liked killing anybody. Even when that person is bad, I know that they used to be good. No one is born evil. "I-I don't want to kill you!"

My remark made her eyes widened. Then she started laughing. "Wha? Of course you want to kill me! Don't you remember all those things I did to Hijikata and Okita?"

I clenched my teeth together. How could I forget that crude moment when they were brutally tortured. "But still, what I've come to believe was that not all demons are evil!"

After the day I've spent with Kazama, I realized that he had a good heart. All he was trying to do was... Marry me. I shuddered at the thought. But he acted so innocent during the time at the mochi stand! Wait what... I blushed hard. Did I just think that Kazama was innocent?! I don't know what came over myself...

"Chizuru... Are you sure you're alright?" Saito walked up to me and held my bleeding arm up. I grimaced at the pain.

"Ow ow ow!"

He observed it for a bit, then said, "The cut isn't that deep. But we have to get it cleaned out before it gets infected." I didn't say anything, only to glance up at my other half who was watching me from the hill.

She was turned around and looked like she was having a conversation with someone. I scrutinized at her but still couldn't make out who it was she was talking to. I saw her look over her shoulder. "We'll finish this next time!" A sudden gust of wind came around her and them she was gone.

What was that all about an who was she talking to?

"Alright men, we have to search the perimeter again! Watch out for Kondou-san or the evil Chizuru!" Hijikata raised his voice. The men nodded and went off going separate ways, leaving me with Saito and Hijikata.

Hijikata looked at Saito. "Get that cut cleaned out and watch over her." Saito nodded. "Of course." With that said, Hijikata ran to catch up with the other wolves. I nervously glanced up at Saito, his face still grim with what had happened.

"Um... Should we get going?" My voice squeaked out and I quickly covered my mouth. Saito said nothing and began to walk in the direction of our dens.

"S-Saito-san! Wait for me!" I called after him.

\* \* \*

><p>Saito had cleaned up my wound and then went off on his own, leaving me alone in the forest. Not sure what to do next, I decided to go look for him.</p>

I peeked inside the dens. Empty. "Huh. Where is he?"

I went inside and stopped at my mat. I lifted it up and removed the short sword from its hiding place. Still the same as I left it... I hesitantly picked it up and observed it.

I turned it around, nothing looks special about it, maybe the red string that was tied at the end but that was it. I held onto the hilt and slid the sword out half way. I saw my eyes reflected on it and I frowned.

They were brown now, the redness faded away and the horns and tail went back into their spots. I closed my eyes and slid the sword back into the scabbard. I peeked at the sword and placed it back into its hiding spot.

I stood up and was about to find Saito when I felt a hand on my mouth.

"Mmf?!" I groped at the hands until I felt myself lose balance and the hands dragged me by my feet.

"Don't try to resist, it's futile."

My eyes widened at the sound of the deep voice. I didn't recognize him. I was pulled out of the cave and into the open. It was already night time, the wolves still haven't returned and Saito was no where to be found.

I tilted my head up to my captor, he had long, red hair tied in a low ponytail. A short beard was seen on his chin, his face expressionless. Adrenaline rushed through me as I kicked and clawed at him.

We barely made it a few feet away from the cave an he suddenly released me. I was shaking as I spoke. "Wh-who are you?"

He folded his arms and said, "Who I am is none of your concern. But know this, I am here to retrieve you for his Majesty."

I was taken aback. "Majesty? Could you be another demon?!" If Majesty meant my real father, then he could be in cahoots with demons!

"It seems you are more well informed than I thought." He seemed impressed and that made me think that he thought I was clueless.

"Hey! You do realize that I'll never go with you! Not to meet that bastard!" It took me a second to finally realize what had just came out of my mouth and I quickly threw my hands over it.

"You... No one disrespects his Majesty!" He flew towards me, I was still in shock so I couldn't move. So instead, I screamed.

"That's as far as you go."

The man stopped and we both looked at the newcomer. My face lit up.  
"Saito-san!" He went up and stood in front of me, a frown plastered  
on his face.

"I don't know who you are, but this feud ends here."

The man stared at Saito and then relaxed his stance. "I have no  
business with you, only the girl. His Majesty requires her  
presence."

Saito stiffened and clenched his fist. "No one will harm her. If they  
try to, they'll have to go through me first."

A strong silence blew past the two men as they continued to stare at  
the other. A voice behind me suddenly broke that silence.

"That's enough, Amagiri."

Saito and I saw Kazama walk up to the man called Amagiri and  
whispered something in his ear. Amagiri nodded and then stared at me.  
"I'll be back to fetch you."

The last word was cut off as a mountain of smoke appeared and he was  
gone. Kazama had my his sly smile and then disappeared in a pile of  
flames.

"What was that all about..." I whispered. Saito said nothing and  
turned to look at me.

"I'm sorry I went off like that. I had to collect my thoughts."

I waved my hands at him. "Oh no it's perfectly fine! At least you  
came back, that's all that matters."

His eyes soften and then he grabbed one of my hands.

"S-Saito-san?!" I stuttered.

He smiled at me. "I wonder why my heart beats faster when I'm with  
you."

"Huh?" I was confused.

He brought my hands to his chest and placed them over his heart. "Do  
you feel it? The thumping in my chest won't stop."

I felt my face heat up. I did feel his heart. Although it was  
moving at a quicker pace, it actually felt... Nice.

I looked up at him, Saito looked peaceful then he has ever been. I  
heard a soft laugh escape his lips. "Is this... What it feels like to  
love someone?" He whispered.

My heart began to skip beats. Saito-san... Loves me? I didn't know  
what to say next, fearing that I may hurt his feelings.

I then did something that he wasn't expecting, I went on my toes and

kissed him on the cheek. His eyes widened and so did mine. I drew back from him and blushed again. "I-I am so sorry!" I did a small bow without looking at him.

"I'm not." He whispered again. I glanced up at him.

"Saito-san..."

He shrugged and held out a hand. "Shall we make it back to the dens?" I accepted his hands and smiled.

"Yes!"

Together, under the moonlit night, we walked back to the dens where all our wolf friends are waiting for us.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>This chapter was shorter than the past few, sorry!  
<strong>

\*\*My profile had been updated! -Celebrates- (This is nothing to be celebrating for) So you guys can stalk my prof. if you want  
.\*\*

\*\*Next Chapter: Meeting my Father with the Wolves\*\*

### 23. Meeting my Father with the Wolves

\*\*Meeting My Father with the Wolves\*\*

"How did all this crap start in the first place?" Hijikata snarled as he pounded the floor of the dens.

I stared at the ground, ashamed that maybe, just \_maybe \_it was my fault. I mean, this basically happened because apparently, I was born a demon and they are the ones who want to take over the world.

Everyone sat in a circle, confused on the information that Saito had just reported about Amagiri wanting to kidnap me for my so-called "father". Did he want me to start leading the demons to attack the surface? I hope not, but we're talking about the king of the Underworld here so who knows what may happen.

"So we have a lot of problems on our hands now." Hijikata looked up and addressed the other wolves. "First off," he held up one finger, "Kondou-san is being held captive by Sannan-san, the reason is unknown for the moment," he held up a second finger, "second, we have Chizuru's evil half running around trying to kill her."

I wrung my fingers in my lap as he said that, how could I not be worried about that at any second, she could come charging in here yelling bloody murder and swing a sword to my head. I shivered. The thought of that was not pleasant.

"And finally," Hijikata held up a third finger, "I assume that Amagiri is trying to take Chizuru to her real father, the reason

why?" he glanced at me as if I had the answer stuck to my forehead. I shook my head in confusion; even I had no idea why. I have never even seen him face to face, in fact, I haven't even heard of him until now.

"So what do you think we should do first?" Okita asked, anger was laced in his voice, probably because the person he cared about most was being held somewhere and had a short life span left.

Everyone turned their attention to Hijikata. He thought silently to himself for a few seconds. "Okay, we first need to think about if these events are somehow connected." He tapped his chin, showing a deep thought process.

I raised my hand as if this was a teaching lesson. Hijikata nodded to me. "Umm, it probably would be connected to each other." The wolves turned to look at me, Hijikata narrowed his eyes. "How so?"

I stared at the ground. "W-well, when we were all at the lake, you know how my other half had to leave before killing me? Before that, I saw her talking to someone in the trees, I couldn't make out who it was, but I did see something shiny there."

At that moment everyone held their breath, and I probably knew why. "Are you sure it wasn'tâ€! Sannan-san?" Heisuke stated out nervously.

No one said anything. They didn't want to believe it, but it was most likely the truth.

"â€! So what do we do?" Harada spoke up, a solemn expression on his face.

Silence once again hung in the air. A breeze welcomed itself into the dens, gently blowing my hair in front of my face. No one still said anything; after all, this concerned a member of their group that has been with them for a very long time. I didn't get to know Sannan-san well, but it seems like he's someone the wolves respected.

"Ifâ€! if you guys need me for anything," I lifted my head, determination crossed my face, "even as bait to draw out the enemy, then-"

"No!" Everyone's voice rung out all filled with anger or worry. I was taken aback about why they all yelled like that. But I really am willing to sacrifice myself for their sake. \_

"Wh-why not? I would do anything for you allâ€!" My voice came down to a whisper. Everyone had their eyes on me.

"Man, you are dumb," Okita crossed his arms, eyes narrowed. "Why would you go to all that trouble? Have you even considered our feelings if you ran out there and gotten yourself killed?"

My eyes widened. Their feelings? Do theyâ€! do they really care about me that much?

"I-I don't understandâ€!" I hung my head and tightened the grip on my fingers.

"We've been together ever since you stepped foot into this forest, all those times we shared together!" Heisuke sounded like he was on the edge of tears, "do you just want to throw all those memories away?!"

"Heisuke, stop that, you're going to hurt Chizuru's feelings!" Nagakura yelled at the young warrior. Heisuke looked away and clenched his teeth.

"But," Nagakura closed his eyes, "He is right."

I felt my hands shake. "But if I don't do something, all of you might lose someone precious to you! Do you want that?!" I immediately clamped my hands over my mouth, surprised that I even raised my voice.

"Everyone changes, if Sannan-san have changed sides, then we just have to let it go. But you!" Saito glanced at me, "you would be the precious one we would lose if you'd thrown yourself at the enemy."

Tears sprung from the corner of my eyes. "Youâ€| you guysâ€|" I brought my hands up again.

"Remember what you said before," Harada smiled gently, "we're family, right?"

I did say that, and I meant it that time too. I covered my face with my hands. "I just wanted to protect you guys, like you did to me!" I wailed.

I felt a hand on my shoulder; I tilted my head and stared into the violet eyes of Hijikata-san. The eyes that mesmerized me when I first entered the forest.

"It's nothing you should be worried about, you've helped us too."

I slowly wiped the incoming tears away. "Howâ€| how so?"

Everyone gathered around Hijikata and I stared at each and every one of them.

"You encourage us to keep on fighting for what we really care for."

A smile crept in and I laughed quietly. "You guys are always trying to find a way to outsmart me, huh?"

The wolves smiled at me. "Hey, don't cry Chizuru!" Heisuke told me gently.

I nodded and felt the last single tear fall from my chin.

\* \* \*

><p>"If you cry out, I will <em>have <em>to hurt you."

Amagiri had me thrown over his shoulders with my wrists and ankles tied up. I was desperately trying hard not to struggle; you don't know how uncomfortable it is to be laying on someone's

shoulders.

"Why would I try to yell for help? We're not even in the forest anymore, so who would hear me?" I stated bluntly.

It was true though. I stared at the hallway we were going through. Cave walls surrounded us with a purple glow emitting from it, giving it an eerie feeling. I shivered, as I recall what Hijikata said before this kidnapping happened.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hey! Are you sure it's okay to let her go off like this?" Heisuke came over to my side. I bowed. "Please! You guys agreed to this same plan before with Kazama-san, so I'm sure it won't be as dangerous."</p>

I saw Okita roll his eyes. "Really? But that time was with Kazama and now you're going to meet your father. So how is it not as dangerous as the last time?"

"Butâ€œ if I go, I might be able to find out some information on my other half, as well as Sannan-san and Kondou-san." This plan seemed risky and I know that, but it may be our only chance! Hijikata frowned at me and then sighed.

"I guess its okay for you to get kidnapped by them. But don't think I'm letting you out of my sight!"

"Thank you!" I bowed my head.

"Hey, why are you thanking us when we're about to let you get kidnapped?" Harada chuckled.

\* \* \*

><p>My eyes widened as I saw the flick of a tail in the darkness and that gave me a shimmer of hope. "They're thereâ€œ "</p>

Amagiri stopped walking and stared at me. "What?"

I flinched. "N-nothing!"

He continued to stare me down and then started walking again. I gave a small sigh.

It was silent the entire way to wherever he was taking me and I kept it that way, I did not want to strike a conversation with a demon.

"Amagiri, what is this?"

\_That voiceâ€œ\_

"Kazama-san?" What was he doing here?

I looked over my shoulder and saw him frowning at the sight of Amagiri kidnapping me. "Forgive me, but his Majesty requested her presence."

Kazama balled his fists up. "What does he want with her?"

Amagiri said nothing as the two demons stared at each other. "That information is not allowed to be classified with anyone, including you."

"Don't give me that bull crap!" Kazama snarled.

I looked at Kazama until he turned his attention to me. I mouthed the words \_don't worry about me.\_

He seemed to get the message and turned around. "Well, whatever. But if \_his Majesty \_hurts her in any wayâ€|" Kazama disappeared in a column of flames.

Amagiri said nothing as he continued to walk down the hall; he acted as if nothing happened at all.

\_How weird of him. \_

After about three minutes of walking he set me down on a chair and begun to untie my wrists and ankles.

I took in the surrounding area and immediately took notice that this was the throne room. A silhouette was seated in the chair at the top of the stairs.

"Is this her, Amagiri?" His voice was deep, but commanding in its own way.

Amagiri nodded and slowly backed away.

I rubbed my wrists and continued to stare at the figure. "Youâ€| you must be my father."

I still couldn't see his face but I could tell that he was smiling.

"You assume correct, daughter."

I gulped and stood up. "I have a million things I want to ask you!"

He shifted in his seat. "I already guessed that and I will tell you all."

I actually \_heard \_him take in a gulp of air. "I know that you recently found out that you are a demon and that is true. I also know that the \_other \_you is trying to kill you and is working with an accomplice. Apparently, both of them are trying to create a world where only demons live and they needed a test subject for that. She also wants you gone because it seems that she can't live with the thought that someone else looks and acts the exact opposite."

All this information that he was throwing out was hurting my head. But I took it all in anyways. "Soâ€| what do \_you \_want with me?" That question has sat on the tip of my tongue ever since I entered this room.

I heard him chuckle. "I \_was \_going to ask you to take over this

realm of demons but now I know that you are too soft-hearted to do that. So I'm just going to let you go, all I wanted to give you information on your situation."

My eyes widened. "Iâ€| I thought you were going to be crueler than you are nowâ€|" Well he \_is \_the demon king, and that would give off the vibe that he was going to be a cruel man who kills without mercy. But this version is chiller than I thought.

"Th-thank you for helping me! But I have one more request for you!" I bowed.

He tilted his head. "And what might that be?"

I looked over my shoulders and saw the glowing eyes of all my wolf friends waiting in the shadows.

"I want you to remove all their curses when all this madness is over!"

My father didn't even bat an eyelash at that request. "I already knew you were going to ask this," he brought a hand to his cheek. "But yes, I will comply with this request but for one condition."

I stiffened as I heard him speak through my mind again. My hands slightly shook as he said his request. I sighed and bowed again. "Iâ€| I accept your condition."

\* \* \*

><p>"Alright, what did you accept for us?" Nagakura carried me out of the cave with the others following behind.<p>

I smiled at him. "He just wanted me to visit from time to time." That was a complete lie but I couldn't bring myself to tell him the whole truth.

"Really nowâ€|" He stared straight ahead.

I nodded and felt my eye lids falling over my eyes.

\* \* \*

><p>My eyes fluttered open and I sat up in the familiar room of the dens. I yawned and stretched out my arms.<p>

"So the sleeping princess awakens."

I flinched as I saw Harada stare at me from the entrance of the cave.

"Harada-san, where are the others?" I walked over to him and sat beside him.

He looked at the trees. "They found Sannan-san and Kondou-san."

I gasped. "Areâ€| are they alright?!"

Harada nodded and smiled at me. "It seems like Sannan-san was tricked by Kodo and is now coming home with a healed Kondou-san."

I smiled and suddenly threw my arms around Harada. "I'm glad they're both okay!" He was shocked at my willingness to hug him but he chuckled and placed his hands on my back.

"Ya. I guess that's one problem less to worry about."

I buried my face in his shoulder. "That's right." I felt my head being lifted up as I stared into his eyes.

"Harada-san?"

He looked at me with passion twinkling in his eyes and brought his lips down on mine. My eyes widened but didn't dare break it. I closed my eyes as I let him take over the kiss.

He was always there for me at my worst times and I'm grateful for him being at my side.

The kiss broke suddenly and I blinked. "Harada-san?"

He looked away, flustered. "Sorry, I did that without your permission."

I laughed. "It's fine, I mean!" I blushed and looked at the ground.

We stayed silent until the rustling of the trees brought our attention. A figure leapt from the forest and Harada helped me up.

"Ah, Chizuru there you are."

I flinched as I stared at my former father. "K-Kodo-san!"

He smiled and flicked out a small knife. "I just need a bit of your blood if that's okay with you."

Harada came in front of me. "No one touches her." He growled and shifted into his wolf form, fangs barred.

Kodo laughed. "I've heard about you dogs. But I never expected to see my Chizuru working with them."

I began to shake with fear. "Whatâ€¦ what do you want?"

He lifted the knife and aimed it straight at me. "I want a world filled with immortal demons, and to do that, I need your blood!"

It happened too fast for me to see what went on. The knife left his fingers and I saw the tip of it.

It was heading straight towards my heart.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>So sorry that I haven't updated! I just a lot of things happening in my life right now so I didn't have the time! Also, I'm balancing 3 stories at the same time so it's tired me out. Again, sorry!<br>\*\*

\*\*Next Chapter: The Final Fight with the Wolves\*\*

#### 24. Side Story : Harada's Charms

\*\*Side Story : Harada's Charms\*\*

Chizuru: Say, Harada-san? I've been meaning to ask you something.

Harada: Hmm? What is it?

Chizuru: You seem to know how to treat a woman fairly. How do you do that?

Harada: Isn't it obvious? All women like to be charmed and be treated as if they were special. That's all there is to it.

Chizuru: Eh. But it seems like you enjoy flirting with them. Do like women that much?

Harada: Only one woman is right for me. Besides, they talk to me first!

Chizuru: Maybe you have some sort of magic power that makes them fall for you?

Harada: Nah. It's all about my body, and my charms.

Chizuru: Wah?!

#### 25. The Final Fight with the Wolves

\*\*The Final Fight with the Wolves\*\*

"Chizuru! Watch out!" Harada's shout rang in my ears as I grabbed his furry little body and leapt out of the way, my demon speed coursing through my body.

The knife grazed my shoulder, but it wasn't fatal, at least I hoped it wasn't

I slid on my heels and glared at Kodo. "Why are you doing this? A world with only demons can lead to a disastrous future!" Wars would break out over territory, leadership and who knows what else it could become.

Kodo said nothing as his eyes continued to bore into mine. It was like he was trying to tell me something.

Harada gently pawed my hand and I realized that I still held onto him. "Oops! Sorry Harada-san." I released him and he leapt from my arms.

He shook out his fur and arched his back, snarling at the intruder. "I suggest you leave this place, if you know what's good for you." To me, his voice sounded very threatening and if I was Kodo, I would've run already. But he was just staring at us, a bored expression on his

face.

"That threat doesn't work on me, little doggie." He laughed. I began to shake, with anger or fear, I do not know. But it seems like he didn't feel as if we were a threat to him.

"Hey! Chizuru, Sano!" A voice called out from the forest. We turned to the voice and saw the other wolves returning, along with two others: Sannan-san and Kondou-san. My face lit up and the shaking stopped. "Everyone!"

They ran up to us and shifted into their wolf form, for the exception of Hijikata, since he can no longer shift into a wolf, but into a half demon. He stood protectively in front of me and growled. "Do you have any idea how pissed off I am because of you?"

I saw Kodo shrug like it was no big deal. "I'm just trying to make the world a better place for my daughter." He held out his hand towards me. "Now, come over to daddy."

I narrowed my eyes at him. "Youâ€| you disgust me. How can I ever be on your side after all the trouble you've caused my wolf friends?" When he captured Okita-san and Hijikata-san \_and\_ when he forced Sannan-san to almost kill Kondou-san.

He sighed and placed his hand over his face. "I thought it might come to this. So that's why," He whipped out eight knives that were between his fingers. "I might have to remove your \_friends\_ \_to\_ get you to obey me."

It happened all so fast that I wasn't fast enough to save them. Knives flew through the air and each plunged right into the wolves' front leg. Pained and surprised yelps echoed around me as I failed each time to try to carry them out of the way. \_He has good aimâ€|\_

Kodo laughed as I stopped in my tracks and stared at him, he was holding one last knife. "Stay back, Chizuru." Hijikata appeared beside me and held up a fist. "You'll never hit me, I'm a demon now." I gawked at him. \_How can he insult Kodo at a time like this?!\_

"Hi-Hijikata-sanâ€|!" He pushed me behind him. "If you're planning on using that last knife on her, you can just forget about it." Hijikata smirked.

Kodo's eyes widened and he smiled. "Well, technically you aren't a fully fledged demon, but," he examined the knife in his hand, "let's just prove it if you can dodge this last knife."

Hijikata smirked again and zoomed off, with Kodo whipping his head back and forth, trying to find an opening. With my demon eye sight, I could clearly see Hijikata run circles around Kodo. \_He can dodge that knife! \_I thought hopefully.

"Hey! Hijikata! If you don't stop, her head will fall off!" I flinched as I felt the cold metal of a blade being held up to my throat, my evil half standing before me. "Ho-how did you get here unnoticed?" I should've sensed her coming here!

To my horror, Hijikata stopped running and stared in my direction, giving Kodo a chance to throw his knife. "Hijikata-san!" I wailed out. The knife went right into his left shoulder and I heard him grunt in pain. He collapsed on to his knees, clutching his shoulder.

Tears sprung from my eyes as I also fell to my knees. My other half smirked and placed the sword away in its sheath. "See? This is what you deserve for ruining my life!" The wolves were twitching as they tried to paw at the knife stuck in their leg. The smell of blood was everywhere, filling my nose with that disgusting scent.

"Howâ€| how could you!" I looked up at my Kodo. "Kodoâ€| Noâ€|" I wiped away my tears and stood up, fists clenched. "Father, how could you do this?! You've always insisted that I make friends back home! And when I finally do make someâ€|" I waved my hand at my fallen comrades. "This is how you treat them?!"

Kodo's eyes widened and I see him beginning to shake. "Iâ€| Iâ€| did this allâ€| for you." He glared at the wolves. "I knew that you were special the moment you appeared at my doorstep, the thing was that I was weak. I knew that if trouble ever befalls you, I wouldn't be able to protect you. That's why," A tear formed in the corner of his eye, "I decided to create an army of monsters, so no one will ever be able to hurt you."

Bewildered, I had nothing else to say. He would evenâ€| become the bad for my sake? Howâ€| foolish. I glared at him. "I'm fine to protect myself! If you had your trust in me, then I can be strong for you!" Kodo looked away, defeat lingered on his face. "I'm sorry; I never really intended to hurt you!" After all he's done, I could never forgive him! But, his fatherly love had affected me, and even if he isn't my real father, I could never be truly mad at him.

"Iâ€| forgive youâ€| father."

"Youâ€| idiot!" My other self spoke up and smacked me, I fell to the ground. She was fuming with anger. "You were supposed to destroy her! Not try to act all loving and understanding!" Kodo said nothing as he took an intake of air. "I never intended to hurt her in the first place." He turned around and started to walk away. "Daughter," he glanced over his shoulder, "I will be waiting for you at home." A smile appeared and he was gone.

"Yesâ€| fatherâ€|" I whispered to myself. I heard a growl of triumph and glanced at my no-longer-fallen comrades. The knives disappeared and they were on their feet, fur bristling at my other half. "Well, it looks like the tables have turned now." Hijikata smirked and pointed to my evil twin. "You are finished."

Disbelief shone in her eyes as she laughed nervously. "You couldn't possiblyâ€| kill meâ€|" Her hand went to the hilt of her sword. "Iâ€| I am a demon!" She slid her sword out and was about to cut me down when a blur shot behind her. I saw her eyes widened as a sickening \_slur \_sound came from her body. Hijikata had plunged a sword into her back; my short sword. \_Ehh?! How did he find it?

She fell to her knees and I instinctively scooted away. Her sword dropped from her hand, sweat forming around her face. "Ahh. Father! Please revive me once more!" She screamed out to the sky. A booming

thunder responded to her cries. "\_Sorry dear, but I don't approve of the way you are treating my other daughter. For that reason, you can now die in peace.\_"

Her eyes widened as Hijikata pulled the sword out and she began to writhe in agony. "Noâ€| No! I can't die yet! Notâ€| before I-" Her body disintegrated in a pile of dust, leaving her long sword behind. "\_Your time was already up, but don't worry, I will treat your soul right.\_" The voice said. My eyes glanced at the two matching swords, as they began to glow. "â€|Father, what do you plan on doing to the swords?" I asked him, the swords began to rise up in the air.

\_Don't worry, in due time you will meet them again. In another timeâ€|" The twin swords disappeared and the clouds covering the sky cleared up, leaving behind a rainbow. \_This seems too cheesy if you ask me.\_

\* \* \*

><p>The day after the fight, the wolves and I headed down to the lake for some relaxation. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary but you never know when you're hanging out with these guys.</p>

"I wonder if father kept his promise to me." I muttered. My demon king father still said no word in the deal we had made. It's something that I hadn't wanted, but it's the only way to reverse the wolves curse. A tear formed in my eye as I thought of all the times we've had together. \_I don't want to leave them. \_"Hey, Chizuru!" Heisuke's voice sounded in front of me and I looked up.

"Eh, why are you crying?!" The other wolves stopped what they were doing and glanced at me. I quickly wiped away the tears. "I-it's nothing really! I was thinking about my other half. I hope she's okayâ€|" \_It's not a complete lie. But I still worry about her. \_"You shouldn't worry about her, I'm sure she's well taken care of." Sannan-san said to me. I nodded slowly and sighed.

\_This may be the last time I will be together with the wolves. I need to make it a memorable one!\_

Tomorrow, I will dedicate my time to each and every one of them. \_Don't forget about me.\_ Was I re-considering the deal I made with him? But it's probably too late anyways. \_They'll probably will.\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Not my usual long chapter and I'm sorry for that! Sadly though, this story will soon come to an end TOT! I thank all of you who have been following me through this incredible journey with the Wolves of Mibu!</strong>

\*\*Second to Last Chapter: Don't Forget the Wolves\*\*

## 26. Don't Forget the Wolves

\*\*Don't Forget the Wolves\*\*

\_You will meet each other againâ€| In another time... \_My father's

words echoed in my ear as I sat alone in the comfort of the dens.

\_Iâ€| don't want to leave them.\_ A tear slid down my cheek and I quickly wiped it away. I hugged my knees tighter and sniffled.

\_They'll forget about me, I just know it. \_Yes, the deal I had made with my father was that once the final fight was over, he would lift the curse of Mibu Forest and the guys will be free at last. The price wasn't as pretty as the wish; they would forget their life as wolvesâ€| and meeting me. "It's all for the best." I whispered to myself.

Once the day was over, everything will go back to how it was before this happened. \_At least I won't be craving blood anymore. \_ I chuckled nervously, but even humor won't help me calm down. I mentally slapped myself and stood up. \_I can't be sad now! They will have the life that they left behind, I should be happy for them! So no more crying! \_Rubbing my eyes so that they won't see that I was crying, I headed out of the dens.

The morning sun glared down at me and I squinted at it. "Last time I see this sun rise, huh?" I sure will miss it. My eyes widened as I saw Okita walked out of the forest. "O-Okita-san!" I called out to him. He noticed me and came over, his signature smile on his face. "Eh, what's up Chi-Chi?"

I rubbed my hands together behind my back as I fought the urge to bawl my eyes out and embrace him. "Iâ€| just wanted to say how long it has been since I first came here. You were the first one I ever talked to after all." The memory of how close he whispered in my ear made my heart swell up. \_It hurts. \_He looked surprised at first but then laughed it off. "Ah, I remembered that day. You were so clueless." He leaned in closer to my ear, just like that day. "But, you know I'm \_still \_a virgin." His breath tickled in my ear.

"O-Okita-sanâ€| is this supposed to be an offer?" I stammered, feeling my face heat up. He drew away and chuckled. "That's up to you. But I wouldn't mind if you'd accept it." I lowered my head. "Is thatâ€| soâ€|?" I frowned and bit my lip, feeling the tears forming in my eye. I felt his hand wrap itself around my arms and I looked up. "Chizuruâ€| why are you crying?" He said to me.

My eyes widened and I rubbed the tears away with my other arm. "I-I wasn't crying." \_That's right. He shouldn't know about the deal I made with father. \_Suddenly, Okita pulled me into him and held me tight. "Chizuru, if anything is wrong, you can trust me to try and make you feel better." I gripped the sleeve of his coat.

"O-Okita-sanâ€| I-" I felt his hot breath in my ear again. "Souji, we aren't strangers anymore." I sniffled and tilted my head to his face. "S-Soujiâ€| then." \_How could I ever forget about any of them?! This whole deal is making my heart hurt. \_He smiled and laid his head on top of mine. "That's right. Remember, you said we're all family now. So, don't cry."

He held me for a while longer until my tears dried up; I gently pulled away from him. "Thank you, Souji. Really, for everything." I began to walk away from him, he didn't try to follow me and I quietly thanked him for that. \_That last sentence sounded like I was leaving him forever. This probably might end up coming true.\_

><p>I continued on down the all too familiar stone path, the confrontation with Okita left me with mixed emotions. "I definitely won't forget about him." The lake came into view and that brought back memories of when we had the Mibu Games held there. My feet carried me to the big rock which leads to the secret underground hot springs. Saito was on the other side of the rock; he was gazing out at the lake. "Saito-san, nice seeing you here." I managed to get out.</p>

His head tilted so that he was looking at me. "Ah, Chizuru, come over here." He motioned with his hand and beckoned me closer. I went over to his side and stared at the lake with him. "I wonder if this lake will still be here in the future." I whispered. "Who knows, the Earth changes as well as humans. But that only happens if humans \_make \_it change." Saito glanced at me. "Something seems to be troubling you." I flinched as he said that. \_Was it that obvious to tell?\_

"How did you know that?" I trembled with each breath. His eyes widened as he saw me trembling. "So I was right. What is the matter?" He lifted his hand and gently caressed my cheek. I averted my gaze from him. "Everything lives so that they may experience the feeling of it. But everything eventually comes to an end." Saito lowered his gaze. "True. Everything does come to an end, but that just makes room for a new beginning. Another experience waiting to happen."

I gasped. \_He was right. \_"So things can be reborn as well?" He glanced at the sky; a solemn expression crossed his face. "If you make it happen, then you will be reborn. Some just chose that their time is up and end it peacefully." A light breeze blew past us, realization in my eyes. "So even if one is made to forget about another, they truly won't forget." His hand dropped from my cheek and I placed a hand over my heart. He smiled at me. "Yes." I smiled back at him.

Time seemed to go by slowly as we watched a dragonfly skid across the lake, making the faintest of sounds. "Saito-san. I won't ever forget what you have said to me, ever!" I wrapped my arms around him, a frown beginning to form on my lips. \_Never forget, things can be reborn, but only if you chose it. \_"Chizuruâ€œ!" I glanced up at him. He lowered his head and brushed his lips over mine. My eyes widened and I stared at him as he pulled away.

"Ah. It seems that I held myself back this time." He chuckled. "But there is always next timeâ€œ!" I lowered my head as he gazed out at the lake. \_Next timeâ€œ! huh?\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Ah! There you are!" I looked over my shoulder to see Heisuke bounding up the slope with his furry tail bouncing behind him. "Heisuke-ku-" He flew towards me and pushed me down in a pile of dry leaves, crushing some underneath me. I stared up at his wet nose as he licked me on the cheek. "Ah, that tickles!" I laughed as he continued to lick me with his wolf tongue. He lifted his head and grinned. "Did that cheer you up?"</p>

\_He was trying to cheer me up? Oh Heisukeâ€œ! \_I sat up and rubbed my head. "Thank you." He barked happily and laid his head on my lap. It tickled my thighs and I fought the urge to push him away, instead, I

placed a hand on his head. I saw his tail start wagging and I smiled. "Heisuke, I didn't know you liked this kind of stuff."

He lifted his head up. "Hey, maybe I need a little comfort here and there." I smiled at him and placed both hands on either side of his head. "Well, how's this for comfort then?" I brought his furry wolf head up and kissed the side of it. His tail stiffened and he began to squirm under me. "Chi-Chizuru!" I felt him move under me and I gasped as I saw him back in his human form, sitting in my lap. "E-Ehh!" His eyes widened and he immediately blushed. "U-Umm, that wasn't supposed to happen!"

Instead of freaking out, I laughed. "Oh Heisuke!" He raised an eyebrow. "You aren't mad?" I smiled. "After everything that has happened, I shouldn't always frown, right?" Heisuke scratched the bridge of his nose and looked away shyly. "I-I guess so! butâ€|" He glanced at me from the corner of his eye. "Do I still get a kiss in human form?"

Surprised, I stared at him. But that went away as I gently moved closer and kissed his cheek. I pulled away and felt myself blushing. "W-was thatâ€| okay?" I stammered. Heisuke blushed and looked away again. "Y-ya. That was perfect." I leaned back and smiled at him. "Ahaha. I'm glad."

He smiled back. "But I've noticed that you didn't use â€"kun at the end of my name." My eyes widened and I tapped my chin. "Huh, you're right. D-did you not like that?" Heisuke laughed and leaned in closer. "It's not like that. Iâ€| just noticed and that made me happy."

My face fell back into its frown. "It made youâ€| happyâ€| huhâ€|" I glanced at the sky. "I wish that I had more time to make \_everyone \_happy." I whispered. Heisuke tilted his head. "You say something?" I jerked back and laughed nervously. "U-Uh nothing!" \_That's rightâ€| it was nothing.\_

\* \* \*

><p>"You seem to like this sort of thing,  
Chizuru."</p>

"H-Harada-sanâ€|" I tried to squirm away from his grip. He laughed and lifted me up higher. "Grab that one right there, it's a ripe one." I spotted it and wrapped my hands around it. "Got it!" It broke off from the branch and he placed me back on the ground. "Who knew you liked apple picking in this season." He chuckled.

I held the apple at the sunlight and it sparkled. Even though it's summer, Mibu forest has the effect to make the weather change in here. "You're right Harada-san, this one \_is \_ripe!" I looked up at Harada. "Thank you for taking me here today. It means a lot to me." He smiled at me and placed a hand on my head. "Anything for you." I smiled back and redirected my attention to the apple. \_This will be the last apple that will be plucked from this forest. I must hold on to it forever. \_

"Harada-san, will you miss this place if it ever goes away?" I asked him. Hopefully he won't catch on, on the real reason I asked that. He looked thoughtful for a moment. "I wouldn't say that I would cry my

eyes out if I left, but," his head tilted upwards, "this place has many memories of my friends, going through the tough and fun times togetherâ€|" he chuckled and scratched his head. "Ya, I would say that I \_would \_miss this place."

I lowered my head and stared at the apple. "I would too." \_I'll also bawl my eyes out. \_"Oh, what's wrong?" I felt a finger rests itself on my chin and it tilted it up. I stared into Harada's golden eyes. "N-nothing's wrong." \_Oh geez, I'm having another one of these episodes. \_He frowned and leaned his face closer to mine, I gulped. "I don't like seeing women sad, especially if it's someone I really care about." I focused on the ground and began rubbing the apple in my palm. "Iâ€| don't really thinkâ€|" I took a deep breath and stared at him. "It's just the thought... of losing something really importantâ€| that's what's troubling me."

He continued to stare at me. "Well that's an easy one." He pressed his finger above my breast, right where my heart was. "If you ever do lose something, you'll know that it'll always be right here, the place where you hold things dearest to you." My eyes widened and placed both my hands on his. "Y-you're right. Yes, you all will forever be here." I held his hand tighter and that made him flinch. I quickly released it. "S-sorry, did I hurt you?"

Harada laughed and rubbed his hand together. "Nah, your nails just dug into my skin, which just shocked me." I sighed and started drawing imaginary circles on the apple. He looked at me. "But what made you ask that question anyways?" My finger stopped and I began to shiver. \_I can't tell him, must not! \_ His eyes widened and he pulled me into an embrace, I flinched at his touched and dropped the apple, it rolled away. "H-Harada-sanâ€|" He held me tighter. "Did Iâ€| did I say something to upset you?"

I shook my head and wept silently on his coat. "Just hold me. Please." I felt his hand on my head again. "Of course. Stay as long as you like." I nodded and clutched his coat tighter. \_Thank you.

—

\* \* \*

><p>"Everyone, I just wanted to say how I really enjoyed being with you." I stood at the entrance of the forest; everyone was gathered in front of me. "Hey Chizuru, you're making it sound like you're leaving." Heisuke spoke out. I looked away sadly, not saying anything. Hijikata stepped forward. "Thisâ€| was part of that <em>deal <em>you made with your fatherâ€| isn't it."

My head shot up and tears flowed out of my eyes, like a never ending waterfall. Everyone else's eyes widened. "Ya. I made a deal with him to reverse the curse that was placed on you guys." I sniffled and tried to wipe the tears away, but it was no use, they just kept coming. "In exchange, everyone will forget about their time in this forest."

Silence crept in; I could feel their anger coming from them. "Whyâ€| why would you go and make a deal like that?!" Heisuke shouted. Nagakura smacked him on his head. "Shut it Heisuke!" He looked at me. "But, why \_did \_you make an agreement like that?"

I hung my head. "I did it for you all." Thunder flashed above us and

we all flinched. \_Done saying your goodbyes yet? Good. 'Cause I'm lifting the curse now.\_ My eyes widened as my father's voice echoed from all around us. Parts of the forest started to wither away into the ground and the ground began to shake. I fell to my knees and scraped against a rock. "N-no! W-wait! I'm not done yet!" I yelled to the sky. \_I told you already, your times up. Now tah tah!\_ My father's voice disappeared and I smacked my fist against the ground in frustration.

"W-whats going on?" Harada shouted. Everyone looked at me and I gave them a weak smile. I flinched as I saw my body starting to disappear, along with all our memories in this forest. "Iâ€| didn't realize that this was going to end so soonâ€|" I took a deep breath and stood up, or what you could say as "standing up" since my legs were no longer there.

"Chizuru!" Everyone's voice mixed as one as they shouted my name in anger, sadness or maybe both. My eyes widened as I saw Hijikata leap towards me. He grabbed me and hugged me, small tears dripping from his eyes. "Youâ€| idiotâ€| making that deal without my permission."

I laughed and glanced at him, my eyes already dried of tears. "Yaâ€| I guess I amâ€| an idiot after all." My eyes glanced at the other wolves and I smiled at them. "Hey guysâ€| You're finally free!" My last sentence echoed in their ears, as I finally left the Mibu forest, leaving more than my friends behind. My memories, my family, and possibly my future. It all lies in that mysterious forest full of men â€"good looking men- who could change into wolves. \_But that will never happen again... Or will\_ \_it?\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Ahh, guys help! I'm like sobbing right now! ToT Oh gosh, the last chapter is next eh guys? Once again, I want to thank all of you guys who supported me along the way, we've had some good times together! xP<strong>

\*\*Many of you have been asking for a sequel, for now, my answer will be: read the last chapter to find out! ;P \*\*

\*\*Last Chapter: Wolves Unite!\*\*

\*\*Thanks to storygirl1015 for the idea she gave me for this chapter! Thank you! -bows- :D\*\*

## 27. Wolves Unite!

\*\*Wolves Unite!\*\*

"Father! I'll be going now!" I called to my father who was working on a new medication. He poked his head out and smiled. "Okay, just be careful Chizuru." I nodded and skipped out the door. The neighbor lady was out in her front porch sweeping again. I acknowledge her with a small bow. She bowed back and I reached up to fix my hair, which was held up by father's two special silver pins.

I wore my purple kimono decorated with Sakura petals along with some sandals. With my basket in hand, I went off in the direction of the

village to go shopping. On my way there, I passed many other people, most of which I knew and greeted. As I reached the center of the village, I noticed a commotion in the square and decided to check it out. A crowd surrounded whatever was going on and I was too short to see it. "Um, excuse me!"

Pushing my way through the crowd was more work than picking the vegetable at the market. After moving past masses of bodies, I finally was in a good enough view. My eyes widened as I saw a man in a light blue coat pointing a sword at a little boy. The man had brown hair that was held up with some white fabric, his green eyes showed signs of boredom. "Now, why don't you be a good little boy and tell me where they went."

The boy cowered under the glinting sight of his sword. "Iâ€| won't tell!" The man continued to stare at boy until a sigh escaped his lips. "Well, guess it had to lead to this huh?" Feeling the urge to protect the boy, I jumped in front of him, arms outstretched. I tore my kimono doing a jump like that but it could always be mended.

"Wh-what are you doing?! You're attacking an innocent boy in the middle of the street!" The man raised an eyebrow at me and lowered his sword. "A citizen shouldn't be talking to the first division captain like that." He shrugged and placed his sword away. Suddenly, my head felt really light. I scrutinized at the man. \_Heâ€| seems familiarâ€| for some reasonâ€| \_I gasped as an event played itself in my mind.

\_I was in a cave. There was another person with me. He leaned in closer to my ear, what was he doing? "I'm a virgin." Was what he said. \_

I gritted my teeth as sweat began forming on the back of my neck. The man looked surprise at my sudden fatigue. "Hey, you sick or something?" I lowered my arms and placed one hand over my chest. The boy took this chance as an escape and disappeared in the crowd, which began to slowly melt away, seeing that the commotion was over. I began to pant heavily. \_Whatâ€| was that memory?\_

The man scratched his and walked towards me, instincts took over as I backed away from him. "S-stay back!" Why did I feel like he was a danger to me? My eyes widened as another memory made its way in my mind.

\_The man was lying next to me. "How about I make the nightmares go away?" Was what he whispered to me. I was crying. Why was I crying, what nightmares? \_

I fell to my knees and clutched my head, dropping my basket. "Wh-whats going onâ€|." I whispered. I flinched as the man extended his hand towards me, concern masked his face. "You really alright?" My head turned away from his hand. \_Why was this man in my memories?

—  
"N-nameâ€|" I whispered. He cocked his head to the side. "Come again?" I turned to stare at his light green eyes. "Y-your name. What is it?" The man gave a wolfish grin and picked me up. I gasped as his hand touched my sides, lifting me into the air. "Heh, usually everyone knows who I am. First division captain; Okita Souji at your

service." \_Okitaâ€| Souji? â€| Okita-san?\_

Feeling even more confused I struggled against his grip. "P-please put me down!" Okita looked surprised but he obeyed. I brushed away the dirt and picked up my basket. The pain was gone and the flashbacks stopped. I gave him a curt bow. "E-excuse me. I have to go somewhere."

I spun on my heels and hastily walked away from him. \_I feel like I know him from somewhere. But where? \_Shaking my head, I decided to forget about it. But what I didn't know that the man named Okita Souji was still staring at me, a grin appearing on his lips as he whispered but one word. "Woof."

\* \* \*

><p>I pursed my lips as I picked up a misshaped onion. <em>Not this one. <em>Picking the right vegetables was crucial in making the perfect dinner. Even one ingredient could spoil the entire taste of the dish. My eyes fell on the right onion and I grabbed it. Examining it I decided that it was just right. I smiled at my accomplishment. "Ah, how am I supposed to know which one is right?"

A man was standing next to me, scratching his head in confusion as he stared at the wide variety of veggies. Red hair tied in a low ponytail, a small white vest like coat that left the center of his chest bare and a spear was held in one hand. I placed my basket on the table and turned to him. "U-um if you'd like, I would gladly help you." I bowed to him and he glanced at me. "Oh? You would help? See, I'm not very good at picking the good ones."

I gave him a friendly smile. "Sure." He smiled back and said to me the ingredients he needed. First was- My eyes widened and I let out a gasp.

\_A red wolf was keeping me warm. We sat at the base of a Sakura tree. I was petting him lovingly, his fur tickled my fingers. \_

A hand rested on top of mine which broke me out of my trance. I stared at him. "You okay?" My eyes rested itself on his hand and I gently moved my hand away from his. "Y-ya. I'm fine." \_Again? What is happening to me? \_ He leaned in closer to me, almost to the point where our noses touched. "You're sweating." I flinched as he took out a cloth a began wiping my forehead with it.

After he was done, we finished picking the foods he needed. He grinned as he held up his basket of food. "Thank you for helping." I bowed. "It was nothing." He smiled and picked up an apple from his basket. He held it out to me. "Here. A token of thanks." I accepted it and stared at it.

\_He was lifting me up higher. He was laughing as was I."H-Harada-san" My hands wrapped around an apple and I pulled on it. I could feel his warm smile emitting from my back. \_

My head jerked at him and he raised an eyebrow. "Hmm? Something wrong?" I flinched and I looked away. "N-noâ€| " He continue to look at me. "Well, I'd best be heading back now, thanks for your help." Spear and basket in hand, he began to walk away.

I stared at his back and tightened my grip on the basket handle.  
"H-Harada-san?"

\* \* \*

><p>Clutching my tired head, I walked down the streets. "I better have father look at me when I get back." Obviously I must've dreamt about these men to be hallucinating during the day time. I shook my head. I glanced around and noticed something odd: there was no one outside.</p>

Suddenly, I felt something over my mouth and I was dragged into a nearby deserted shop. I struggled against the person. "Shh. Keep quiet or else they'll hear you." My eyes widened at the sound of his deep but quiet voice. I glanced up and my eyes met with his ocean blue eyes.

I flinched as a rifle sounded from the distance. A parade of men marched by, each wearing the exact same uniform. \_What was going on? \_The warmth of his hand felt vaguely familiar, like he has touched me before.

\_I was at a lake, taking a bath. I glanced up and saw a dark blue wolf. He suddenly shifted into a human. I squealed and tried to cover myself. He apologized and promised he didn't see anything.\_

I scrutinized at the memory. \_I've never been to that lake beforeâ€|  
—

The men passed us and he released me. I turned to face him, dark blue hair that was in a ponytail, resting on his shoulder. "I'm sorry for scaring you like that. But I didn't want them to hurt you." My eye twitched. "H-huh?" He rested his left hand on his katana, which was strangely on his right side. "They're importing a very special package to the Bakufu. If anyone stands in their way, they will be gunned down."

\_Gunned down? That's harsh for just delivering a package. \_But he did save me so I should thank him. I bowed. "U-umm. Thank you, for saving me." He kept the same poker face on. "Ya."

I kept my head low as I recalled the image from earlier. \_I don't understand any of this. Maybe I had lost my memory of these people? \_I looked up at the man. \_He does seem familiar in some way. \_"U-umm. D-do I know you?" He stared at me and frowned. "I do not believe we have met before." Of course he would say that. Maybe \_I'm \_the one who's going crazy.

"I-I'm sorry to have bothered you!" I bowed again and ran out of the shop.

\_I felt his soft hands caress my cheek. He was trying to comfort me from having a break down. Calm, gentle fingers that seemed to lay an invisible trail of calm feelings in them. \_

Again with this image. Do I really know all these guys? Or was it that this is the work of some un worldly being?

\* \* \*

><p>"Hang in there Chizuru! You're almost home, and maybe then father can check if you've gone crazy or not." I muttered to myself. I sighed in relief when I see my street coming up. "H-hey! W-watch out!" I swung my head around and saw a boy -that was almost my age- running towards me. He pushed me down and I dropped the basket of foods.</p>

I blinked and groaned in pain. "O-owwâ€|" I glanced up and saw him towering over me, eyes wide with concern. "A-are you alright?" I scrutinized at him and nodded slowly. "Y-ya. I think soâ€|"

He sighed and sat up, helping me in the process. I rubbed my head and was surprised that I hadn't bruised it. He scratched his head and laughed nervously. "Sorry. I was in a hurry so I didn't see you there." I glanced over at the fallen foods and began picking them up. "I-it was no big deal."

The boy noticed the mess on the ground and began helping me. "A-again, I'm sorry." I reached over to the apple at the same time he did and our fingers brushed each others.

\_The boy changed into a wolf. He leaned his muzzle next to my bloodied knee. My eye twitched as he bit into the wound. The pain was suddenly gone and he began licking the blood. It tickled.\_

I frowned and looked at him. "U-ummâ€|" He glanced at me. "Hmm?" I then looked away. "N-nothingâ€|" How could I tell him that I had yet another weird hallucination, this time about him? People walked past and stared at us. Embarrassment weld up inside of me as I placed the fruit back into the basket. The boy helped me up and I brushed the dirt away from my kimono. Hopefully father wouldn't notice how late I was gone.

The boy smiled and scratched his head. "Ah, sorry about that. I'm Toudou Heisuke" I did a small bow. "Nice to meet you, Toudou-san. I'm Yukimura Chizuru." He laughed and fiddled around with the hilt of his sword. "What an awkward situation we're inâ€|." I smiled and looked up at him. "I-I guessâ€|"

Silence enveloped us as more people moved past us. His eyes lit up and he gasped. "Ah! I totally forgot about it!" He turned around and began to sprint the other way. He stopped suddenly and looked over his shoulder. "Oh, see you, Chizuru!" He then disappeared into the crowd.

I tilted my head to the side. "E-eh. What just happenedâ€|."

\_He pushed me down and began licking my face. I laughed and started to pet his furry little head. We were both happy to see each other, trying to comfort each other's feelings.\_

"â€| This is definitely not normal." I frowned and walked back to my house, where my very impatient father was waiting.

\* \* \*

><p>After spilling the whole story to my father, he didn't seem too impressed. He kept on telling me to rest and stop with the childish stories. I gave up after that and just decided to keep these moments to myself. As I chopped the onion, tears flowed down my cheek and I

squinted to see where I was cutting. But for some reason, I didn't think that it was the onion that was making me cry.<p>

I flinched as I heard an animal let out a howl. My eyes widened as I turned around. I wiped the tears with the sleeve of my kimono, feeling disappointed. Huh? \_Why was I sad? Did it have something to do with that animal cry? \_I shook my head and focused on my cooking.

"Chizuru. Are you almost done with the soup?" My father's voice rang out from the room next door. I held the spoon in my hand and took a sip of it. I smiled. "Yes father. It is ready." He shuffled from the other room and poked his head in. "Ah, that smells lovely." I did a small bow. "Thank you."

I carried the tray to the living room and placed it in front of my father, then I went back to fetch mine. We said our thanks and began to eat.

Half way into our meal, my father spoke up. "Chizuru. I'll be leaving for some work soon. Will you be okay by yourself?" I lowered my chopstick and bowl of rice and looked at him. "Of course father. I'll look after the house, so don't worry." He smiled and continued to eat. "Good girl."

As I finished the meal, I decided to ask father where he was going. "Father, where will you be?" He folded his arms. "I'll be doing some work in the states for a while. Will that bother you?" I shook my head and stood up. "No, I just wanted to know." I gathered our lunch and headed to the kitchen, an uneasy feeling forming in the pit of my stomach.

\* \* \*

><p>Father left for the states the very next day. I swept the front yard and sighed. "It'll sure be quiet around here now." I noticed a small pile of dirt next to the fence and brought my broom over. A loud crash echoed from the inside of my house and I jumped. "Ah, what was that?!" I leaned the broom on the fence and ran in. I gasped as I saw the smashed pot that laid in the center of the room. I bent down and started to pick up the shattered pieces when I noticed what had hit it.<p>

It looked like a sword. A black case held it and a small red string was tied to the hilt. I picked it up and examined it. "A short sword. I think." I placed it back down and looked around the room. How had this flew in and smashed a pot? Was there someone playing? I frowned and tossed away the pot. I placed the sword on my tatami.

I stared at it. "I... I've seen this beforeâ€|^" No, how could I? I've never been in contact with a sword until today. I reached over and placed my index finger on the scabbard. I slid my finger across the smooth surface. "I've definitely held this before."

Footsteps were heard outside and I stiffened. "Huh, looks like the old man has left his house." A low voice laughed. "Ya, lets burn it tomorrow." The two men left, leaving me in a state of shock. \_They were going to burn the house down? Iâ€|^ I have to leave.\_

My heart pounded in my chest and decided that father would rather see

me safe than the house. I nodded and began to make a mental list of what I should bring with me. Dreading the moment if they see me, the house will not be the only thing that will be gone.

\* \* \*

><p>I poked my head from behind the fence. The coast was clear and I tipped toed away from my house. I decided to wear a men's clothing, in addition to my hair up in a ponytail. I will seem less obvious that way. My fingers cautiously brushed the hilt of the short sword that rested against my hip. No man should be seen without a sword right? I guess you could say that I was lucky to have gained this sword yesterday.</p>

Walking through town, I made sure to check if the sword was still there. I bumped into something and fell on my side. I scrutinized at the thing I bumped into. "Ah, s-sorry!" I heard a sigh and the person helped me up. My eyes widened at the sight of his crimson eyes. I did a quick bow and slammed my eyes shut. \_He seems scary!\_

"I see you have an interesting taste for fashion." He man's low voice rung in my ear and I lifted my head. I flinched as he leaned in closer to my face. "U-umm. C-can I help you?" My voice shook as he stared me down. His lips curved up into a smile. "Ah, it seems like you \_did\_ \_forget everything.\_ \_Huh? What did I forget?\_

I narrowed my eyes. "I-I have no idea what you are talking about, but leave me alone!" I pushed past him. He seemed surprise by my behavior and grabbed onto my arm. "Heh. I know the perfect game I could play with you now." My eyes widened as I tried to pull my arm away from his grip. "Wha-what? L-let me go!" I finally pulled away and began to run.

The man watched my retreating figure and he tapped his chin. "A wonderful game indeed. Something that goes, woof and nyan."

\* \* \*

><p>I panted as I placed my hand on a wall. "Wh-who was that man?" I glanced around and noticed that it was already late. The moon hung over my head, mocking me that my house was already ashes. "Ah, I hope father will understand why I left." Now the hard question: where was I going to stay? That didn't even crossed my mind until now. I sighed and glanced at the star filled sky.</p>

"Hey you! What are you doing out here?" I flinched as I turned to the voice. A man was towering over me with a sword pointed at my neck. His raven colored hair shined as the moon casted its glows. My eyes widened. "A-ah! Wa-wait! I-I didn't do anything!" I held my arms out. He frowned. "Then what are you doing outside the Shinsengumi headquarters?"

I let out a gasp. "Sh-Shinsengumi?!" How in the world did I end up here? "Hey, Hijikata-san, whats with all the ruckus?" Another man came out of the building, followed by more. The man who just came out spotted me and gave a wolfish grin. "Oh? Why didn't I see you yesterday?" Hijikata glanced at him. "You know him Souji?" He shrugged. "Who knows."

Hijikata frowned and redirected his gaze towards me. "Well, are you

going to tell me what you were doing out here?" Another man went to Hijikata's side. "Vice commander, maybe you should try to calm down so that this person will answer properly." He sighed and re sheathed his sword. "Man. Do you always know what to say Saito?" Saito said nothing.

I glanced at the group of men. Realization hit me as I remembered the encounters I've had yesterday. They were all from the Shinsengumi?! My eyes widened as yet another image crowded my mind.

I stood at the edge of a forest. Tears slid down my cheek as I stared at my new found friends. "Hey guys! You're finally free!"

I gasped and I fell to my knees, clutching my head. "Y-you! guys?..." The other men looked puzzled as to why I suddenly collapsed. Hijikata bent down. "Hey, you alright?"

"Heh, looks like you're finally getting it all back." My head turned and I saw the man from earlier, his red eyes glowing even in the night. The Shinsengumi immediately got out their weapons. "Who are you?" Hijikata got up and glared at the stranger.

He chuckled and held both his hands out. "Seems like you've also forgotten the feud we've had for each other." He walked closer and the members of the Shinsengumi stiffened. The man stared at me and I gasped. "Chizuru. Now that you're no longer a demon, I plan on playing with you for a bit."

As he said my name, I felt like someone has released a storm of memories down my brain. Events played in my head as I glanced at the Shinsengumi; it appears like that storm has also hit them as their faces showed a shock expression.

My head swung around as I facedâ€œ "Kazama-sanâ€œ He laughed. "Ah, seems like you remember now." I looked at the Shinsengumi and tears immediately spilled out. "Everyoneâ€œ They glanced at me and smiled. Hijikata suddenly pulled me into an embrace. "Idiot! If we haven't regained our memories, I could've struck you down!" I cried on his shoulders and nodded.

Kazama sighed and placed his finger on his temple. "Well now, since you seem to be united with your wolf friends, let's start with our game." He held out his hand and I felt my chest beginning to tighten up. I gasped as I pushed Hijikata away and placed both hands on the ground. Sweat poured down my neck.

"Chizuru?! Whats wrong?!" The wolves- noâ€œ the Shinsengumi sounded me and my eyes widened as I let out a high pitched scream.

The pain subsided almost immediately and I glanced up at the guys. I'm okay now guys. But that's not what came out of my mouth.  
"Nyan?"

Everyone gasped as they stared at me. I lifted up my hand and my eyes widened. No fingers, but white paws. I glanced over my shoulder and noticed black and white fur on my back. I started to panic. \_Ah! What happened?! \_Mrrrrow!?"

"Well, let's see how long you guys can play this game." Kazama

chuckled and I saw Hijikata leap towards him, sword now unsheathed. "Bastard! What did you do to her?!" Kazama dodged the blow and smiled. "Don't worry. The curse isn't permanent. Like you guys before, she can change from human form to innocent little kitten form."

He then disappeared. "Let's see if you're animal instincts will come back if she acts like this." I stared at the guys and instinctively licked my paw.

\_Great. Now I'm the one stuck in an animal body. What were the chances of that?! \_Hijikata cursed under his breath and turned to the men. "I'll bring her inside; you guys wait in the command room."

Will I be stuck in this body forever? What if Kazama was the only person who could undo the curse. Well, he was long gone now, who knows where he probably is. Was it my destiny to feel the pain the Shinsengumi had when they were animals? ... Maybe it was. Maybe this was my punishment for all the things I've done to them.

Hijikata picked me up and stared at my new form, a frown on his face. "Well how are we supposed to deal with a little fur ball like you?" I shook my furry head and yawned, letting out a pitiful little; mew. Yes, if this was the price to pay, then I'll accept it.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Guys! I finished the last chapter! -Crys- I want to thank everyone who supported me! It was a pleasure working with you guys! <strong>

\*\*As many of you have been asking, YES! There will be a sequel! Ah, I'm glad it doesn't end here huh? \*\*

\*\*The sequel will be called: Feline Madness. I am currently working on Chapter one, but for the sake of waiting forever for me to post it, here's the summary:

><strong>

\*\*\*Kazama is back with his old tricks and this time, turns Chizuru into a harmless kitten! Having a cat in the Shinsengumi headquarters isn't what they had in mind, but why not? The captains animal instincts are raised when she lets out a pitiful little nyan! A fight breaks out on who gets to take care of her first! What's going on here?!"\*\*

\*\*So how is it? xD Well I'll see you guys in the next fanfic! Look out for it!

>Next Fanfic: Feline Madness<br>\*\*

\*\*First Chapter: Nyan is all I can say, nyan?!\*\*

End  
file.